



A ANTHONY BARNETT BOOK

SHORT FILMMAKING

STARRING

OSCAR WINNING TIPS

INTRODUCING

INDIE FILM
DIRECTORS & ACTORS

FEATURING

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAYS

TO: PRODUCE-ADAPT-WORKSHOP

FILMMAKING/ACTING TECHNIQUES

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Introduction
Walk before you Leap Q & A

Making a short film gives you the opportunity to gain experience...

Q. what is experience?

A. “Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes”. Oscar Wilde

Directors:

Q. why make a short film?

A. the art of how to make a film can all be learnt cost effectively by embracing this genre.

Q. wouldn't it be better to make the full length movie that I've written?

A. you'll need a lot of finance for that. It also, for a first attempt, will more than likely end up as 'car crash filmmaking', leaving you with a hefty overdraft and many broken promises.

What better way to avoid that nightmare than to prove to an investor or employer that their money may not be wasted, by offering them a viewing of a short film, that you have made, that shows them your potential, without showing them the many “mistakes” you may have learnt from along the way. “A mistake may turn out to be the one thing necessary to a worthwhile achievement”. Henry Ford.

Q. where could I show my short film?

A. in competitions. There are many, if you look out for them online. They often usefully do not give a theme, but do usually stipulate a maximum length.

Q. what would be the point of entering a film competition?

A. win, or come 2nd or 3rd and you have got yourself a great calling card for employers or investors. Plus, the feedback you will get from not only the judges but the audience will be invaluable for future projects.

Q. as an unknown how can I get noticed?

A. by making a short film! Short enough to want more; long enough to impress. You want your work to be seen. By offering a busy potential employer or investor this genre your wish is more likely to be successful.

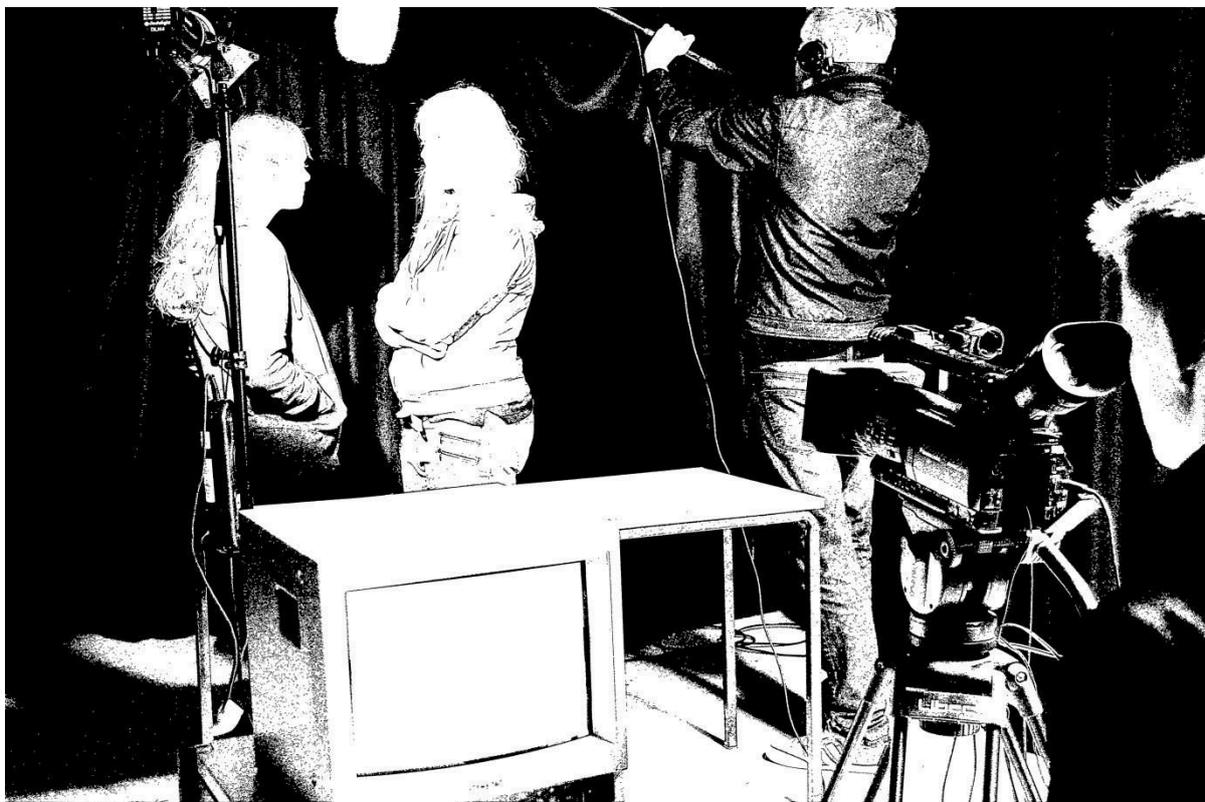
Actors:

Q. how can I use this guide to improve my screen acting?

A. the information here will give you a complete understanding of the mechanics of filmmaking and the requirements for you to give a screen performance. With that knowledge you will confidently perform for the camera. Use the scripts to practice on camera your technique, or to complete a showreel for casting directors.

Chapter 1

Single Camera Q & A



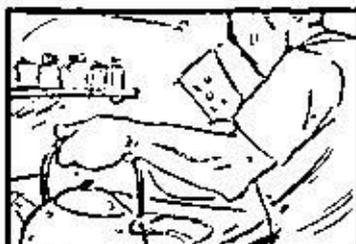
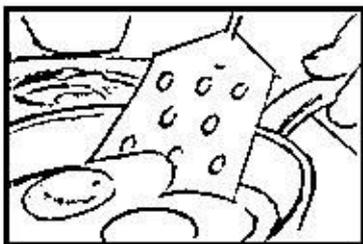
Q. why do filmmakers use only one camera ?

A. a/ because it gives you complete control over each shot; lighting, sound, acting, mise en scene, atmosphere **b/** one camera makes it cheaper to resource, although more expensive with time. **c/** however: use more than one for an action sequence where crashing cars or blowing up a building can only be done once. This expense is unlikely for a short film budget!

d/ or a star like Robert De Niro may want their performance covered "...if it's a very emotional scene, it's very hard. That's why I like to use several cameras. Otherwise I might have to get myself worked up again..."¹

Q. should I storyboard each shot?

¹ CARDULLO, B. et al (1998) Playing To The Camera. Yale University Press. p.292



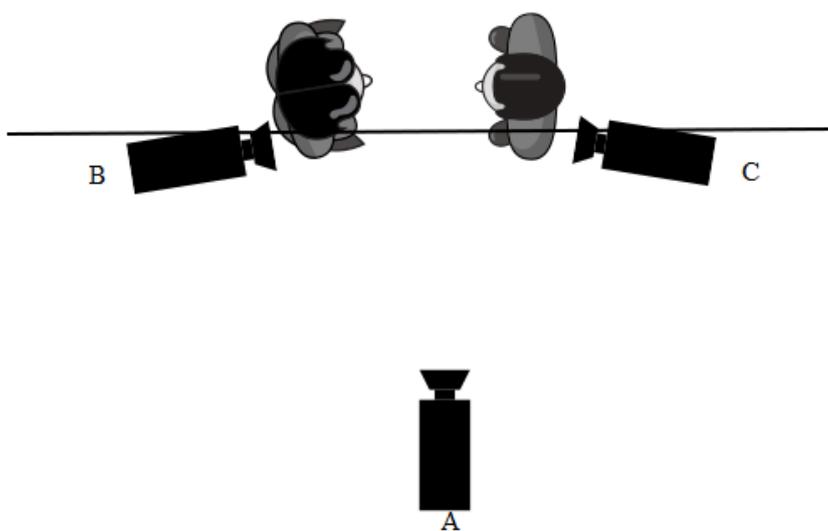
A. no, unless you are:

a/ a good illustrator or have a storyboard artist or software to hand.

b/ shooting a really short piece of a minute or less where each shot needs to be absolute in its execution i.e. a commercial.

Q. if I don't storyboard how will I know what to shoot?

A. plan your single camera positions marking them A –Z as below.



you will get your 'coverage' with some of the following Shot sizes of your actors as in the scene below where the cameras are positioned as in the above single camera plan



, Master Shot (MS) Camera position A



Reverse Medium Close Up (MCU). Camera position B on Man, C on Woman



Reverse Close Up (CU) Camera position B on Man, C on Woman



Reverse Big Close Up (BCU) Camera position B on Man, C on Woman



Revers Extreme Close Up (ECU) Camera position B on Man, C on Woman

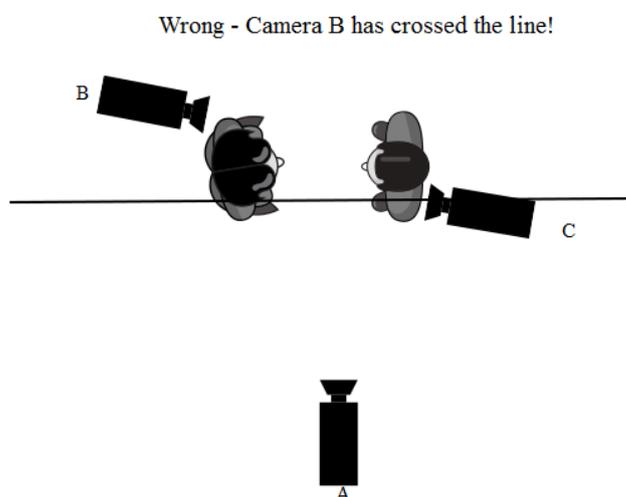
Technically the above shots have been achieved by not crossing the line/ breaking the 180 degree rule.

What I hear you ask?

Be patient: take your time understanding the following to avoid many frustrating times in the edit with unusable shots like these



where your actors are no longer looking at each other when you try to edit! This is because the line (180 degree rule) has been crossed when positioning camera B, as in the sketch below



How to never get it wrong:

a/ looking at the Master Shot above always imagine you are in the place of the camera (position 'A' in the sketch above) looking at both actors. Between their heads imagine a line from the side you are filming (in this case camera position A). Camera positions 'B' & 'C' must never cross that line filming behind the actors as we see in the last sketch camera B has, causing the Man not to be looking at the Woman.

b/ the master shot shows the Woman screen left and the Man screen right. All the following variety of sized reverse shots need to bare these actor positions in mind. Camera 'B' focussing on the male placed screen right looking screen left. Camera 'C' focussing on the female placed screen left looking screen right.

c/ by making sure the back of an actors head in the reverse shots is placed screen right or left

respectively you leave plenty of what is known as ‘nose room’ (space between their nose and the edge of the frame in the direction they are looking) as seen in the shots above.

d/ in the above Master Shot, the Male actor is taller than the Female; for the eye- line to be correct in all of the reverse shots the camera has been set at each actors respective height looking either up or down from their view point.

Q. What if the standing talent is too tall to place the camera at their height for a reverse shot ?

A. Place the shot at a comfortable angle below the tall talents height making sure the talent in the reverse shot is keeping their eyeline looking towards the tall talents eyes above the screen frame.

Q. What do I do with 180 degree rule if a character changes position on screen?

A.

a/ in the following Master Shot from Farewell To Arms starring Gary Cooper (1932- DVD. 00. 48.20 to 00.48.49) we see from camera position ‘A’ the following Master Shot



Then the actor standing on the right crosses behind Gary Cooper sitting as seen below



Where we see the moving actor now on left of screen as below



The line of action has not changed. The standing actor has; because the actor was seen crossing behind the sitting actor the viewer will not be confused with the following change in the reverse shots. Camera position 'C' focussing on the standing actor will now be a MCU with his head left of screen looking (down) towards screen right. The sitting actor with the camera in position 'B' focussing on his MCU will now have his head screen right looking (up) towards screen left – with remember plenty of 'nose room' for both.

If we did not see the standing actor crossing behind the sitting actor right to left, the subsequent reverse shot would not edit together. Always remember to ask yourself, what position the actors are in, after you have movement in a Master Shot and make sure you show the movement happening in a master shot.

b/ the line of action can be crossed/changed if the following happens as seen in this sequence from Frank Capra's 'It's a Wonderful Life' starring James Stewart and Donna Reed (1947–DVD. 00.23.29 to 00.26.31)



1. Master Shot



2. Donna moves off



3. James picks up a stone



4. Donna returns



5. Line crossed with view of derelict House



6. Making a wish before throwing stone



7. Single shot of derelict house



8. About to throw stone



9. James throws stone smashing window



10. Man on balcony hears glass smash



11. Donna & James continue to flirt



12. Donna & James continue to flirt



13. Donna looks with idea to make a wish



14. Donna throws stone shatters glass



15. Both look with glee at result



16 Off again flirting down the street



17. Man on balcony still watching



18. James passes behind Donna



19. James now is left of screen



20. Man can be seen on balcony behind



21. Man's eyeline to where they have moved to



22. James signals the moon



23. Eyes have got us looking at moon



24. Camera seeing in 'Depth' Man behind



25. Man light heartedly yells for him to kiss her

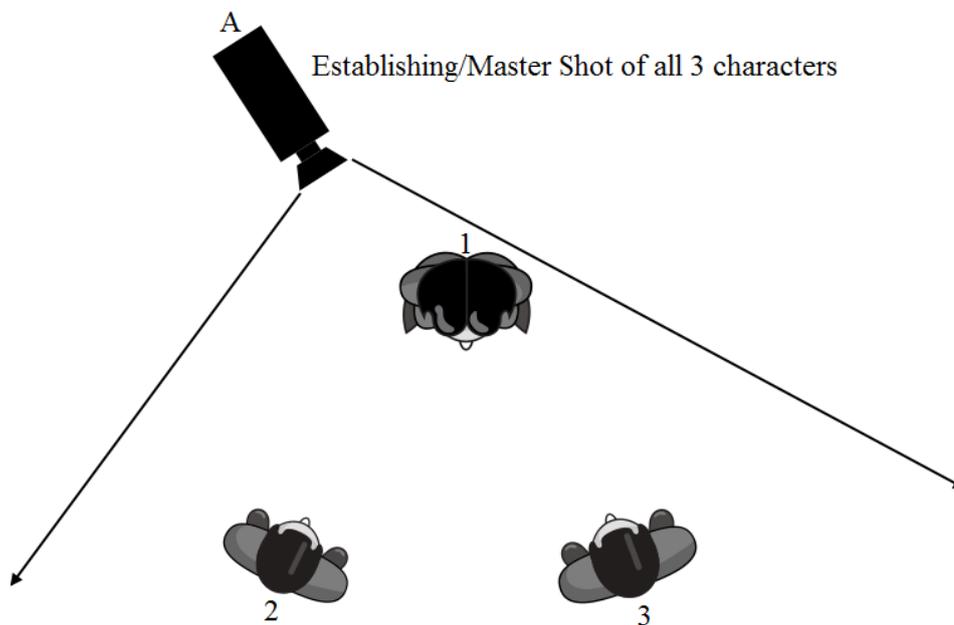


26 Mans POV of them both

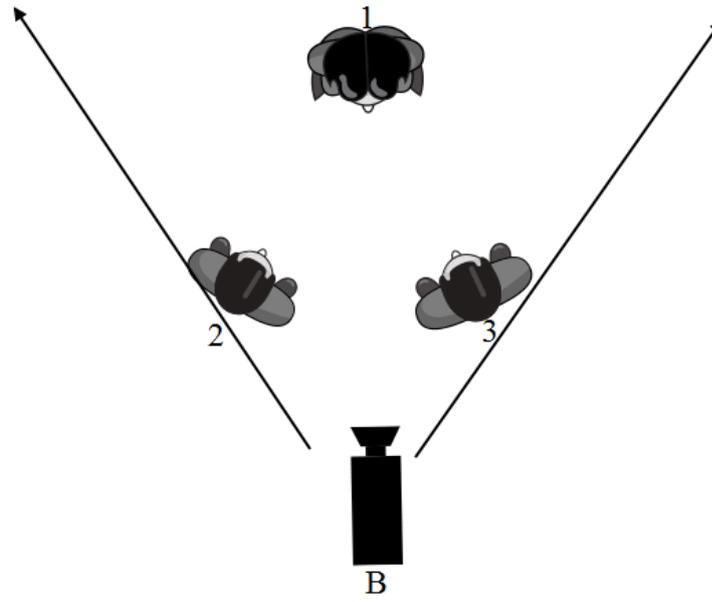
This scene works because we are always informed as a viewer, where the actors look, taking us backwards and forwards to new lines of action and the POV from the Man on the balcony whose house is on the same side of the street as they are.

Q. How can I make sure that with more than 2 characters in conversation in a shot, that, in their individual reverses, they are looking as if they are talking to each other?

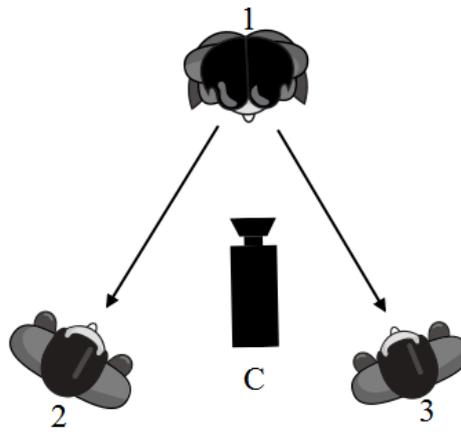
A. with difficulty, solved with the following type of planned single camera positions A- E below...



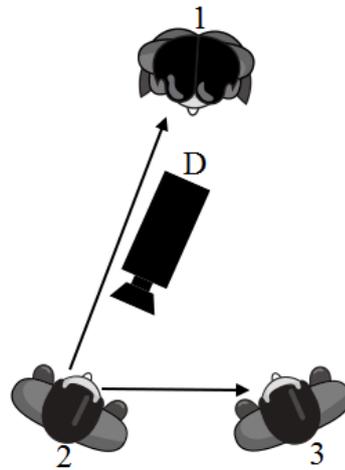
Master Shot No:2 of all 3 characters



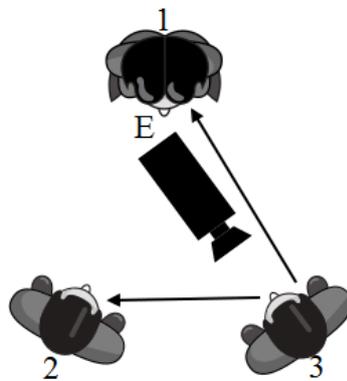
Character 1 (placed centre screen) looking left & right of camera to 2 & 3



Character 2 (placed centre screen) looking left of Camera to character 1 and right to character 2

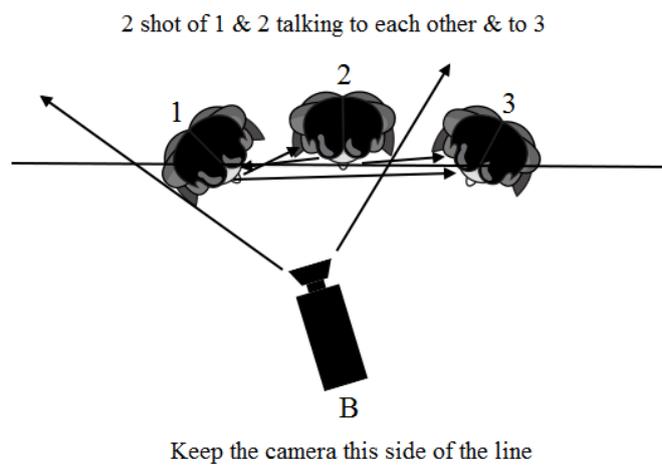
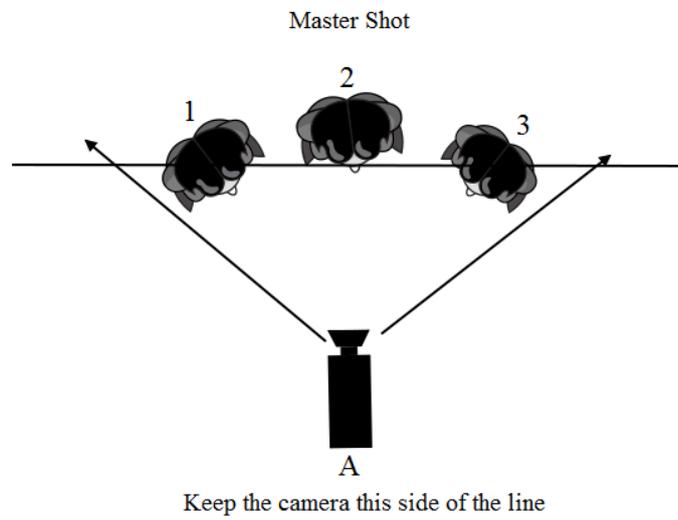


Character 3 (placed centre screen) looking right past camera to 1 and left to 2

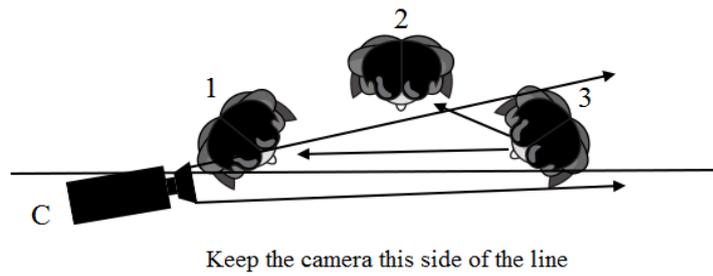


It is vital to make sure that actors do not jump out at the viewer by ‘spiking’ the camera lens (looking into the lens). This is something that can happen fleetingly, unintentionally by the performer, surprising everyone in the edit.

The following is an alternative 3 shot single camera A-E set up...



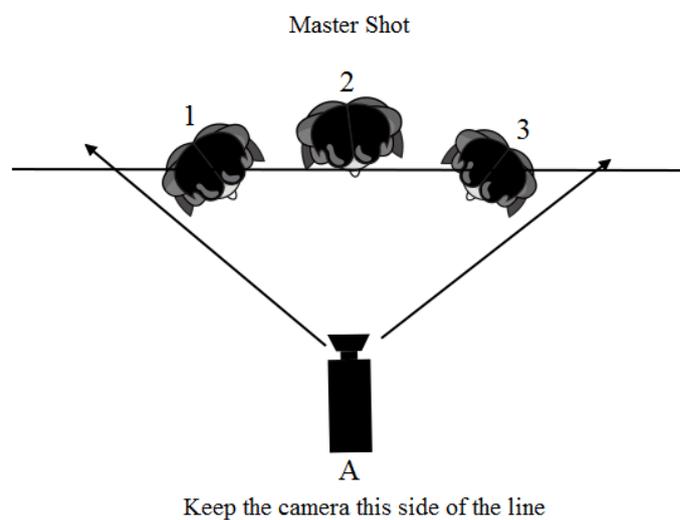
Single Shot Character 3 (placed screen right) looking left with 'nose room' to 1 & 2



Here you could cut back to the Master Shot

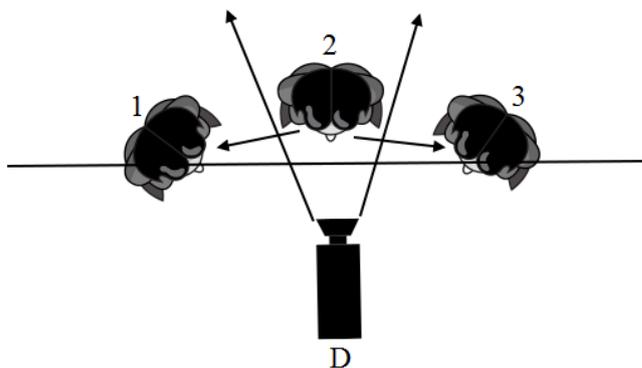
The above camera position 'C' could not cut to a 2 shot of 2 & 3 because it would mean that from camera position 'B' with the 2 shot on 1 & 2, character 2 would jump from Right to Left of screen if you cut between the two .

With the above single shot of character 3 and a cut back to the Master Shot



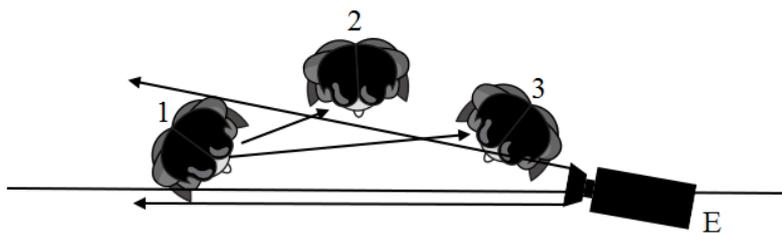
You can now introduce more single shots like the following...

Character 2 (placed centre screen) able to look left & right to 1 & 3



Keep the camera this side of the line

Character 1 (placed left of screen) plenty of 'nose room' to look right



Keep the camera this side of the line

These are the basics that you need to know for crossing the line, eye lines and not breaking the 180 degree rule. With larger casts the principles are the same only slightly more complex. With the knowledge of the above, you will now be able to work it out, with caution.

Call to Action

Q. what are the correct commands to “Action” ?

A. Director: “silence on set” – “Lights?” – “Sound?”- “Camera?” -“Slate”- “Action”
”Cut”

Slate/Clapper Board only needs to be called for if you have one. Each question above requires a “Yes or No”. If “No” get the problem fixed and go again.

Do not get lazy with these commands. Always use them to avoid confusion.
 You might also add – “ mobile phones off”!

Tip:

a/ Shoot each scene through from separate camera position with the actors performing it each time from start to finish (BCU & ECU optional).

b/ it is possible to shoot a single actors reverse without the other actor/s being there. As long as they are looking at where the other characters should be and at the correct eyeline and height.

Why might you do this? – Why might it work better?

If the other actor/s are not available. Get someone to read the lines off camera for the on camera actor to speak and react. This can lead to a better performance for the on camera actor, because they do not feel obliged to please their fellow actor, freeing them to perhaps take risks with their performance uninhibitedly.

c/ get your actors to be doing something before you say ‘Action’ and do not say ‘Cut’ too soon. Allow some time after the end of a shot – then say ‘Cut’. With both before and after movement/action all will be easier to edit.

Maximising Coverage

Q. How can a director maximise coverage?

A. instinct – does the shot look right, feel right, for the story you are filming? Try high angle, low angle, panning, tilting, tracking, big close up, extreme close up shots etc.

Example:

A great classic example of ‘Coverage’ and ‘instinct’ can be seen in the famous Hitchcock ‘Psycho shower scene’ (DVD 00. 43.49 or view on You Tube); during just over 3 minutes of film there are 61 cuts of shots, some longer than 3 second some shorter. There are 55 different camera positions using a variety of techniques which include in addition to locked off camera positions, panning, tilting, tracking, flash cutting (a shot that lasts for less than a second) and jump cuts.

Saul Bass the great American Graphic Designer did in fact storyboard the scene for Hitchcock. However it is a good example of how even if a storyboard is created it is often replaced by inspiration on the day. The only part of his storyboard used was the famous 'drain - eye' match cut shot (46 seconds) - Shower Head (2 seconds) - the tilt up from Janet Leigh's head, panning past the bed, tilting up to tracking in to the bedside newspaper then panning and tilting up to the window and the view of the lighted house opposite. (21 seconds).

It is because of the camera movement that you will read that there are more than 75 shots in this scene. The fact is from 55 camera positions the camera is shooting different sized shots or is moving. The pace of cutting and movement give the impression of more shots than the 61 cuts.

With your Short Film allow yourself plenty of time to film plenty of creative shots and if appropriate with movement. You will then have complete control over the atmosphere you create.

Be warned: if you 'Film in haste, you will repent at leisure'. The 'Psycho Shower' scene' took 7 days to film, early starts and late finishes each day.

Do not forget Point Of View shots (POV). If a character is writing as in 'Psycho' (DVD 00.43.51)



The audience wants to see what is being written from their POV, as indeed we do in the following shot, where for 3 seconds we see her bank statement and what she is writing in her note book.



This POV shot is in many of the films you will watch. However because it is only there for a few seconds, new filmmakers often miss its inclusion. It is almost subliminal – in fact I call it the ‘**subliminal shot**’ - **don’t fail to get it!** Technically it is also known as The Subjective Camera Angle. It needs to be shot over the shoulder nearest to the Master Shot camera position side, avoiding crossing the line (in the above POV over right shoulder).

Q. When should the camera Zoom in and out of shot?

A. Never – unless you are making a music video or you want to make your viewer feel uncomfortable using it as an effect as part of the story ! Why? Because our eyes do not zoom: such a visual would make us too aware of the camera’s movement: the perspective of walls etc., will close in on the image.

Tracking is the answer, keeping the perspective as our eyes see it.

Q. When should I use a Steadicam?

A.

a/ Never - in narrative screenplays when there is no rushed action. Using a Steadicam, especially when the camera cuts to a single shot of a character, we become aware of the camera operator’s nervous control as the filmed content sways inside our rigid flat screens as we view. Unforgivable, regrettably too often seen. Being distracted away from the story by unnecessary camera movement should be the good directors concern, noticed and remedied during the shoot. **Insist on the camera being on a tripod.**

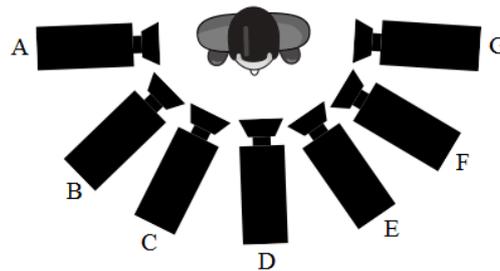
b/ Yes – when action is being filmed, fast walking, running, subjective action shots (POV’s) etc.

Bad Camera Positions

Q. Are there any bad camera positions?

A. Yes. Looking at this illustration

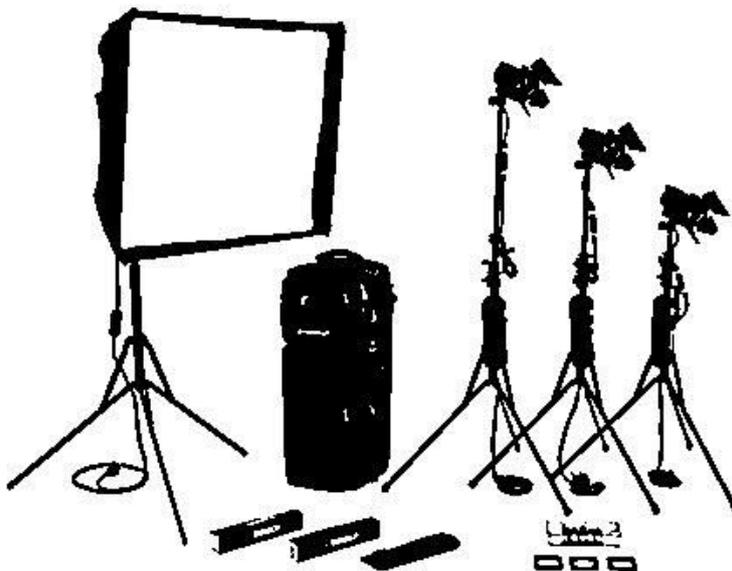
45 degree plus camera position rule



It is not advisable to place a camera less than 45 degrees from a first camera position when wanting another shot. Why? It will look messy rather like a jump cut. Shooting A & D would be acceptable but **not** A & either B or C. Likewise, C & F would be acceptable but **not** C & either D or E.

Lighting

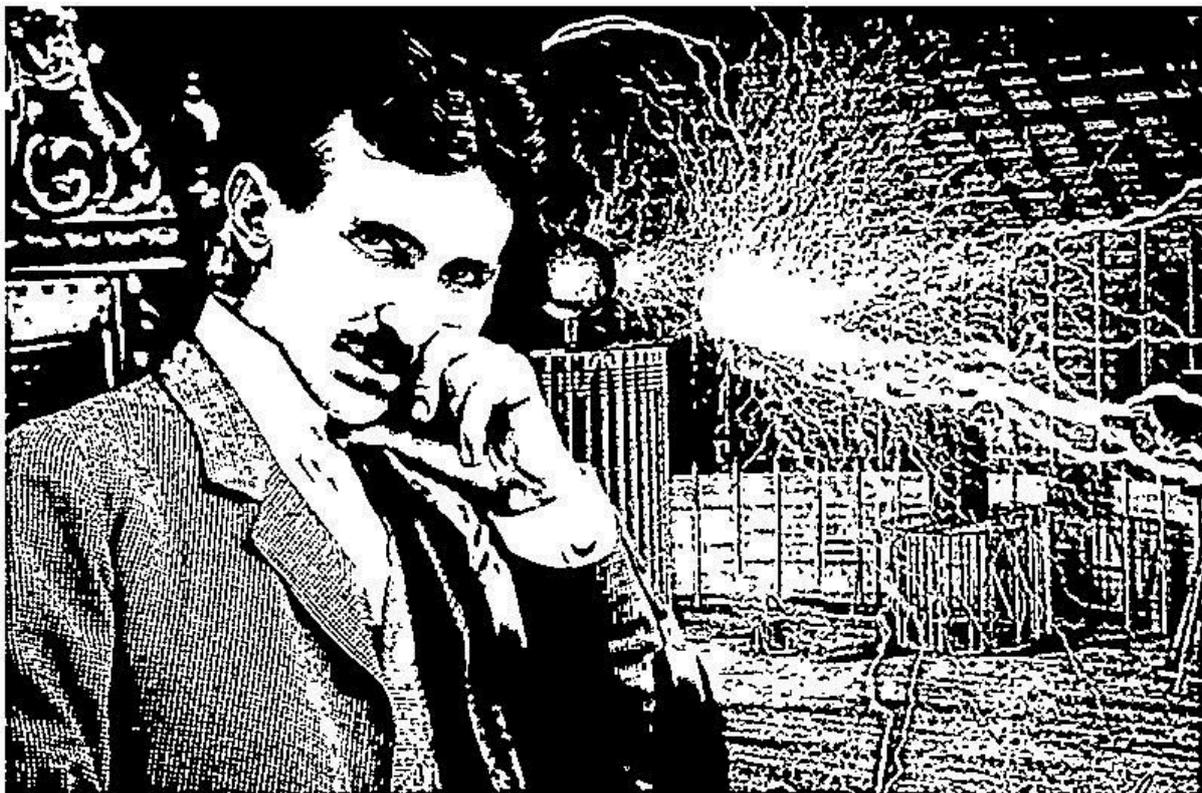
Q. Do I need to use lighting?



A. Yes, Yes, Yes! It may surprise you to know, that even ‘reality shows’ i.e. Made in Chelsea, Come Dine With Me, The Only Way Is Essex etc., pre- light scenes. Why? Because natural light is not enough for the camera. You may think it is. You will look and may conclude that there is plenty of light. Now squint your eyes



see where the light and shade is? The shade will be too much. The responsibility for this when filming is that of the Director Of Photography (DOP) also known as Cinematographer. The person in charge of setting the lights up is the Gaffer. Your film will have no atmosphere if you fail to pay attention to ‘painting with light’. Make sure you understand its power and thank Nikola Tesla below!



TIP

a/ most professional solid state cameras have a ‘Zebra’ setting that will show where over exposure is taking place. For safety use it. You cannot fix over exposure in the edit!

b/ if filming outside, use the **cameras viewfinder** with an external portable monitor attached. If you use the LCD on the camera you will find the lighting around the picture either shows it

is bright enough or not, whichever way, when you get the files uploaded in the edit, you may be disappointed with it either being too dark or over exposed.

c/ failing to light the eyes of your talent unless intentionally to hide their face – is a sin. The eyes are your film talents most important tool of their trade. You deny your audience an understanding of the characters being portrayed. Dialogue is often secondary to reaction; that glance; that stare; that tear drop etc. We need to see it – not have to imagine it. Lights, lights, lights.

White Balance

Q. What is white balance?

A. Our brains adjust colour as we encounter different environments. The camera cannot think and needs to be able to gage correct colour by being told what white is for each different environment. This can be done manually by holding up a white or light grey card in front of your actors, zooming in and filling the screen with at least two thirds of the card and pressing the cameras manual balance button.

If filming indoors with daylight coming through windows put blue daylight gels on your lights and only then do the manual white balance, with the gels on.

Q. Should I always manually set the white balance?

A. That is a question all self respecting cinematographers' would not need to ask, however sometimes (though seldom) location situations may need to be rushed and the following may be accessed.

Most cameras also have an auto 'pre-set' switch that allows the camera a choice of 3200 degrees Kelvin for indoors and 5600 degrees Kelvin for outdoors. If your picture looks very blue when outside you will know it is on the indoor setting and needs changing. If reddish when filming indoors then you have got it on an outdoor setting. Always think of the big number 5600K representing outside open spaces and the smaller number 3200K for the indoor setting.

N.B. Some indoor fluorescent light tubes are special daylight tubes that you may find installed in certain indoor locations to avoid a condition effecting staff known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). In that case the pre-set outdoor white balance 5600K would be selected.

Q. What if I want film at night?

A. One way is to film Day for Night. You set the cameras pre-set to 3200K the indoor setting. Outside that will give you a blue hue. Turn the iris down to as dark as it will allow. Make sure you do not film the sky in the shots and that you turn lights that would all be on at night, cars lights etc.,.

TIP: If you do shoot at night or early dawn or early evening, make sure you have an additional light on your actors faces that is not too blue so that the viewer can read their faces especially the eyes.

In the edit colour grading can then be added if needed to create more atmosphere of night.

Sound

Q. How important is sound?



A. You can get away with some bad cinematography in a few shots with good sound. You cannot get away with good cinematography at anytime with bad sound.

So much attention by manufacturers has been paid to the picture quality cameras produce, that sound has been left with less attention.

The DSLR camera is a case in point. Fantastic control over the depth of field leading to cinematic shots. However to achieve quality sound you need to add quality sound equipment that will need to be synchronised to the image in the editing timeline.

For good quality sound my advice is, only use professional cameras that have integral XLR Inputs as seen below



unless you have access to a sound mixer.

Q. What skill does the person in charge of sound need?

A. With dialogue the microphones distance to the talent will depend on the size of the shot. With a Medium Close Up and Close Up it is vital to get the microphone on a boom pole as close to, in front of those speaking, as the top of the frame will allow



Q. How loud should actors talk if the microphone is that close?

A. Sound advice for Talent, Directors and Sound Operators: only allow dialogue to be projected to the distance of the microphone. Do not let a theatre performance projecting to the rest of the crew to be filmed. With less projection, the face becomes more expressive, giving more emotional information to the camera and thus viewer.

TIP:

a/ be aware that with the closeness of the microphone, the talent should be speaking more quietly – but they will possibly also be speaking more slowly. You may need to ask them to increase the pace and intensity – not the volume!

b/ make sure your actors are speaking clearly. Not mumbling. Reality incoherence is not welcome by audiences that may need to pause and rewind several times (if they can be bothered that is).

c/ directors: remember the more you have read the script and the more you hear it spoken, any incoherence may, be going unnoticed by yourself because you know it so well.

Acting Talent

Q. What makes a good actor?

A. a/ imagination.

b/ good actors appear to think quickly; vocally they can change gear effortlessly i.e., fast, slow – loud, soft – happy, sad etc... while keeping the pace and mood.

Q. What makes a star?

A. Personality: that indescribable something that the camera loves, that is unique to their personas and cannot be imagined as anyone but who they are - Cary Grant, James Stewart, Ingrid Bergman, Greta Garbo, Katherine Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart, Marilyn Monroe, Eddie Murphy, Al Pacino, Michael Cain, Morgan Freeman, Halle Berry, Whitney Houston, Arnold Schwarzenegger etc., .they play to their type with little variation and audiences love them for it.

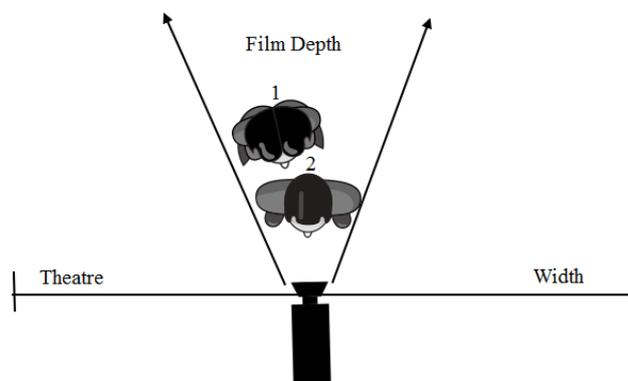
Q. What if an actor's performance is not appearing to be real?

A. bad actors signal that they are acting. It's what I call 'Acting Acting', inflicting emotion on the text. To stop this, direct by saying "just say the words/lines without emoting – let the words act you'. This will usually work if a performance is not seeming to be real.

Film vs Theatre

Q. What is the main difference a director needs to be aware of between theatre and film?

A. a/ the camera allows the viewer to see in depth not as in the theatre width. A wide angle lens can be used but it will distort.



This needs to be born in mind when directing (blocking) more than one person in the shot. The above sketch has two characters talking to each other with the viewer being able to see both of their faces. Possibly unnatural in real life, but on camera a scene played this way depending on the content would work.

Character 1

I know you've been sleeping with Gillian

Character 2

When would I have time to do that?

It's taken up looking after our son while you're at work.

b/ In theatre the character speaking on the stage is the one an audience cannot help but look at. In film the director decides who the audience is to look at. Often it will be the character who is not speaking who the camera needs to see for the 'reaction' shot to what is being said.

Reaction Shots

Q. Why the reaction shot?

A. If the camera is on a character in a single shot making a speech, once they have started to speak, we know what that character looks and sounds like. We then want to know what those listening are thinking. The director will cut to their reactions to signify this. We the audience know from the sound of the speaking character's delivery what they are thinking and feeling. We the viewers need to know what the listening audience is thinking and feeling. Encourage your 'reacting' actors to react. Just thinking it may not be enough. Time to direct for a bit of 'over re-acting'! Reaction shots are vital for dialogue scenes.

TIP: in theatre an actor looks at a script to make sure they have plenty of lines. In film an actor is better off being the main character in most scenes but with less dialogue and more listening/reacting (close up screen time).

Continuity

Q. What is continuity?

A. www.moviemistakes.com proves that it is almost impossible to avoid the odd (odd being the operative word) continuity error. However in a short film it may become more obvious, so make sure you avoid 'it'. 'It' being the occasion when something disappears from one shot to another.

Example: In Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (DVD. 01.14.30 to 01.14.34) we see James Stewart enter with a Xmas Wreath on his right arm



1. He starts to take the wreath off



2. He throws the wreath on the table behind



3. No wreath on arm



4. Wreath on table between woman & man



5. Wreath on arm for remainder of conversation. We have seen the man move behind to right.

Q. How can 'continuity' errors be avoided?

A. a/ actors can help by marking their scripts to do something on a certain word or moment.
i.e. sip a drink in a certain hand holding it in a certain way

MEN

FADE IN:

INT. WINE BAR. DAY

Girl chat. Female characters A & B sit at a table. Wine bottle between them and drinking from glasses.

A
Why do some men claim to be sexual athletes? A

B
Because they always come first!

Both laugh

A
Oh you are funny...Do you ever talk to him when you're...you know (indicates making love)

B
Only if he telephones!

Once again both roar with tipsy laughter

A
We...we...love em really...Hey...mine walked 3 miles the other day in the rain because the car had broken down in the middle of nowhere and neither of us had are phones on us.

B
Yeah... Well that's what they are designed for

A
Yeah ...and when he came back dripping wet I said 'what took you so long'.

B & A
That's what we're designed for!

Both laugh hysterically

Both drink from their glasses

FADE OUT.

By doing that, when performing the same scene from different angles the editor will love the actor who does just that! Also the continuity person will love the actor who points out the drink had already been drunk. Actors love to be loved. If you are going to be that actor make sure it's you who is loved not loathed.

b/ directors make sure movement is into the shot and out of the shot. Not stilted waiting for the word action and cut.

Again the editor will love you for this and directors love to be...well, love to be right! If you are going to be one of the same director and editor then you'll certainly love yourself even more.

Even the best though get it wrong. In the above Hitchcock 'Psycho' scene (DVD 00.44.52) Janet Leigh's hair is dry having just been under t the direct to camera shower POV.

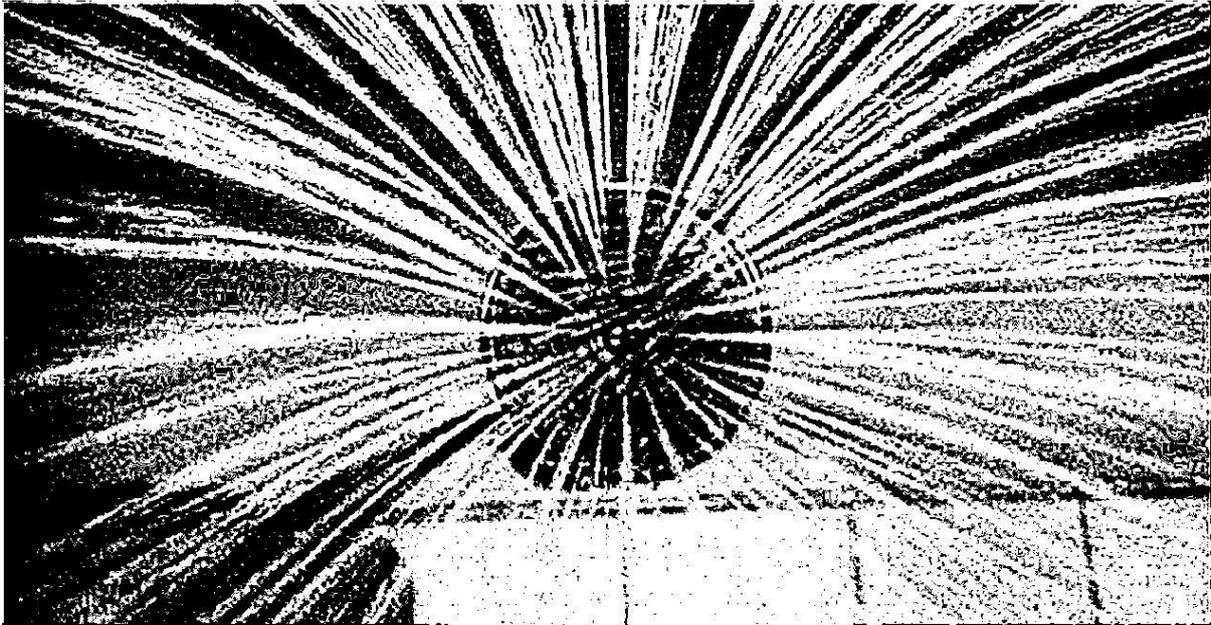


Cutting to the next shot below (DVD 00. 4457) it is as it should have been - wet .



...and to add salt into the wound; from the previous dry cut to that it could never have had time to be that wet!

And another thing regarding continuity here: in 'Psycho' (just to show you conclusively why you should try to get it correct to avoid one of the many, who make filmmakers lives a misery), I question the 45 degree angle of the shower and its spray from the side view. Why? Because in the previous POV of the shower head seen below (DVD 00.44.49 – a 1 second **subliminal** shot)



the spray appears to be showering almost straight down onto the character.

It's a clever shot not to have the water from the shower head POV touch the camera lens. An alternative though, could have been more believable, by having the water splash the camera lens then cut, as if going onto the characters face and eyes shutting?

The lesson here is: always try and pre-empt questions your audience may ask for an answer to. In these days of pause and rewind that has never been more necessary. Filmmakers of old could have had no idea that modern technology would allow the general public to examine every frame. You do!

Helping Actors Be Natural

Q. How can I help direct (help) actors to appear to be natural in the environment of a scene?

A. Props, props, props. If an actor has not found themselves something that their character would have with them, then give it to them (within reason). In your everyday & night travels in the world, watch everyone around you, and yourself, we are all of us usually, fidgeting with something while engaged in conversation.

The great director/writer Billy Wilder in the classic film ‘Some Like It Hot’ gave Jack Lemon for the ‘I’m engaged/I’m a boy’ scene a pair of moochachas and said “In between each line play them”. Lemon said that at the time “I thought he’s nuts – he’s really blown his lid” but in retrospect “The scene was great. Billy Wilder was great again”.²

Of course this could be a nightmare for continuity, but we now know how to lesson that likely error.

Meryl Streep once said that Robert De Niro was so obsessive about detail that for their movie *Falling In Love* he examined 40 different but near-identical jackets before deciding which one perfectly suited his character. De Niro confirmed this saying “Somehow that particular piece of clothing, that particular something, that particular prop opens up a subconscious door or avenue to things that you’ve accumulated over your life that made impressions on you, that you associate with using that particular thing, that you bring back. It comes back to you. And you might not even know why. So it helps give you what you feel is right for that character.”³

Cheating

Q. How do I, as a director, get what I want into a shot?

A. Cheating:

There is little real when it comes to the ‘seeming’ reality of film (and that goes for the realest, of what is supposed to be real – documentary filmmaking – but that is another story).

When shooting, there is only one place a director should be looking. The temptation is to look beyond the camera, to the actors performing in front of it.

Your only concern once the camera is rolling is to look at **The Monitor** which tells you exactly what is in **THE FRAME**.

a/ always with more than one person in a shot i.e., a 2 Shot, 3 shot or more, try to ‘cheat’ your subjects into the shot with as tight (close) a shot as looks comfortable in the frame. This may not be comfortable for your actors, who may feel that they are invading each others space. A distance of 3 feet and no less is considered as close as we feel comfortable with unless emotionally involved. For the camera that may not look close enough...

If it looks right in the frame, convince your actors likewise. The fatal error you as a director might make, is to widen the shot to make the actors feel comfortable.

b/ in a MCU it may be that the prop they have felt comfortable with in the Master Shot is not visible in the frame in the MCU being just below the bottom of it. Ask your actors to cheat it

² CARDULLO, B. et al (1998) *Playing To The Camera*. Yale University Press. p.270

³ : <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/moslive/article-2131682/Piers-Morgan-interviewing-Robert-De-Niro-How-I-answer-sighed-actor-Please-I-silently-begged.html#ixzz3cLnwKvyf>

up so that you can see it. Maybe the holding of a glass they are drinking from etc. Again this may feel uncomfortable for your actor but if it looks better in the frame, convince them of that.

c/ cheating a physical character trait into shot is also important. If a character has been ringing their hands with nerves in the Master Shot ask the actor to cheat this trait into the frame of the MCU as is shown here where James Stewart is having a nervous breakdown in *It's A Wonderful Life* (DVD. 00 .31.54).



It would be no use to an audience signifying his nervousness, if his hand was out of shot.

Tip:

Directors

Always let the talent know the size of shot so that they may adapt their performance to it vocally and physically with props etc.

Talent

Always ask what size of shot you are being shot in so that you may adapt your performance to it vocally and physically with props etc.

Talent & Directors

In the frame of the shot from Mid Shot to Extreme Close Up: remember eyes can be affective looking up above the frame, as well as the usual down and sideways.

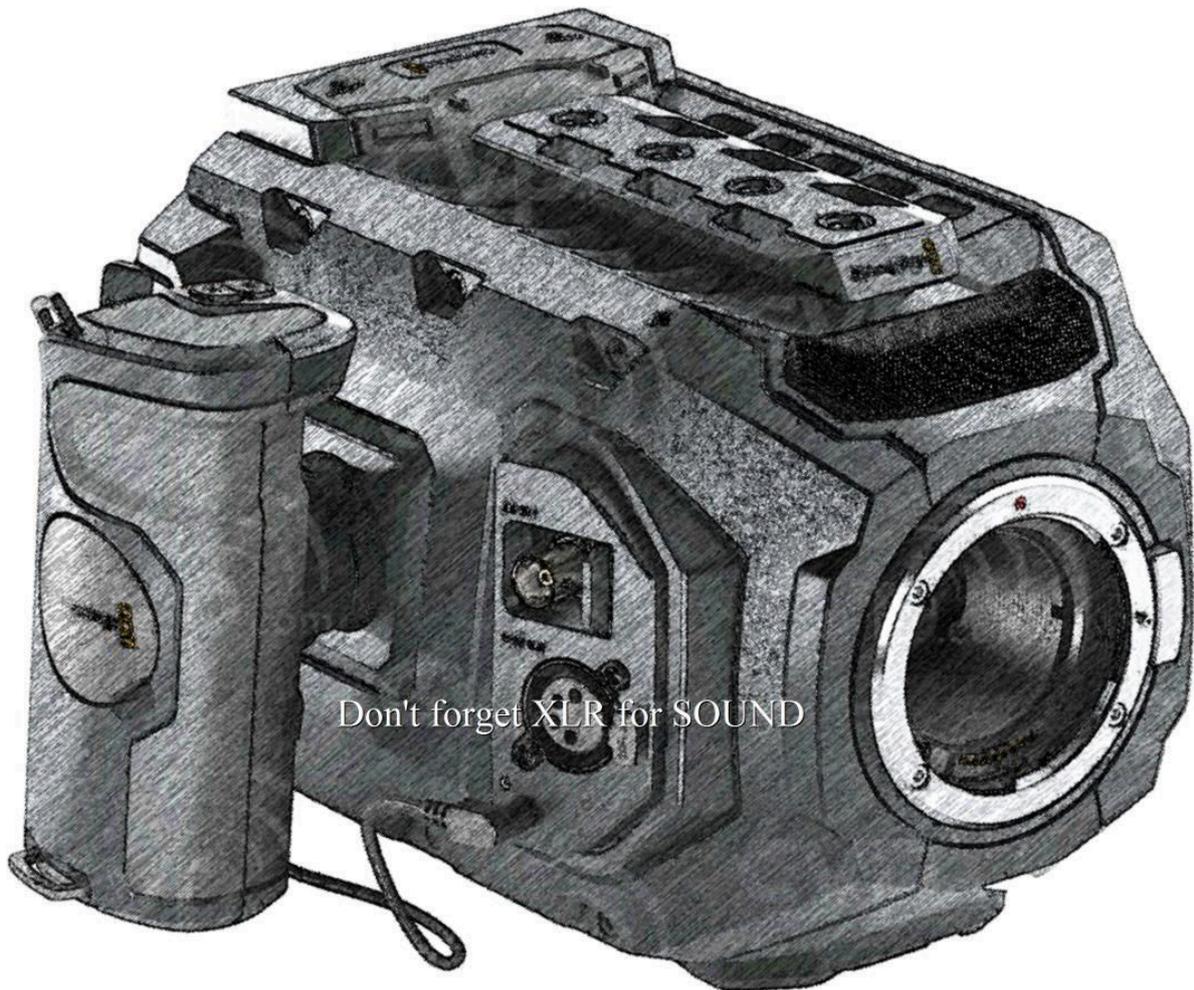
Chapter 2

What Camera? What Lens? Q & A

Camera

Q. What camera?

A. For a cinematic look (film look) a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR), Black Magic, Red, or other digital camera body that can accept a variety of lens types that may be changed to suit the director & director of photography's vision, are required.



Black Magic Camera Body

Fig.1

Q. What size sensor should the camera have?

A. Select a camera with a sensor that is an advanced photo system type-C (APS-C) NOT a Full Frame sensor that will be more likely with certain lens settings to result in a vignette created by the corners of the frame darkening with a feather rounded edge showing the circular shape of the inside of the lens.

Sound

Q. Should the camera have an XLR input?

A. Yes, as the camera body in (Fig 1) shows. Never buy or use a camera that has a mini sound jack input.

Q. What microphone?

A. Use a quality ‘short shotgun’ microphone with an XLR cable from the camera to a boom pole. Quality costs money, but will save a lot of heart ache. Cheap microphones are poorly engineered, screws fall out and produce the one issue you are trying to avoid – bad sound.

Q. What boom pole?

A. Be careful – once again money buys quality – cheap ones rattle and fall apart.

Lenses

Q. What lenses?

A. Prime Lenses

Q. What is a ‘Prime lens’?

A. Prime Lenses for image quality in narrative filmmaking.

Q. What is a ‘Prime’ lens?

A. It’s not a Zoom lens! It has a fixed focal length allowing for much more sharpness than the aforementioned and will allow for a faster shutter speed in low light usually also having a capability of a wider aperture. The faster shutter speed is important because when you use a wide aperture the faster you set the speed you will be reducing the light that may be too bright or conversely the more light needed, a shutter speed of the minimum 1/50th for moving talent will be available.

The following 3 lens sizes will provide the necessary tools for creative vision.

a/ Prime 24 mm Wide Angle



Provides a broader perspective to capture grand vistas or small interiors.
Also known as short lens due to its short focal length.

Ideal for:

Deep focus

Wide shots

Master & Long Shots

Long depth of field (DoF) all subjects sharp

N.B - Never use near an actor unless you want them to look fat and distorted!

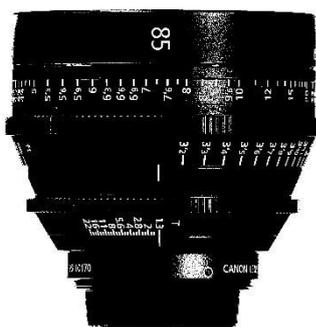
b/ Prime 50mm Normal Lens



Fixed focal length lens.

Normal lens: mimicking almost what the human eye sees.

c/ Prime 85mm Short Telephoto



Fixed focus. A natural angle of view and perspective.

Ideal for:

Low light shooting.

Shallow depth of field.

Shallow focus for 'bokeh'

Bokeh

Q. What is bokeh (pronounced ‘Boh’-then- ‘Ke’ as in Ke-s) ?

A. This is ‘bokeh’ written in its original language ボケ : that may, if you don’t read the language, look like a ‘blur’ which is exactly what it means in Japanese! It is when the background (Fig 2), or background and foreground (Fig 3) are not in focus drawing attention to the subject/s who will be in perfect focus.



Kings Speech Fig.2



Kings Speech Fig.3

It is the classic cinematographic look that until digital technology allowed would have required film cameras and film stock at a prohibitively unattainable price for an independent novice filmmaker.

All the film stills prior to these two that were taken from films dating back to 1932, show bokeh.

Q. How do I create the bokeh look?

A. It's all in the Depth of Field (DoF) that you control with the selected lens and aperture setting. Fig.4 shows the varying degrees of f/stops. The lower figure being the widest aperture.



Fig.4

With an 85 mm Short Telephoto Lens you might expect in Fig.5 the following to be in focus within the DoF with the bokeh (ボケ) area in foreground and background. The vertical line shows a longer distance will be in focus in the background.

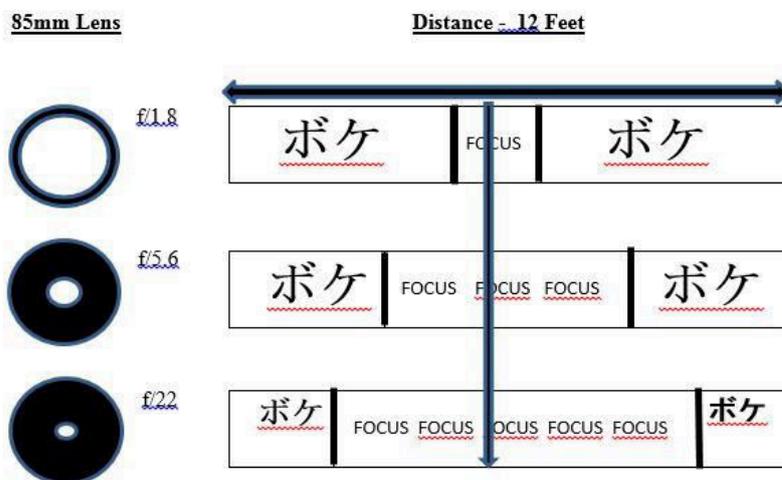


Fig 5

Pulling Focus**Q. What does pulling focus mean?**

A. You may have one characters in shot. Another character joins the frame in the background. To accentuate their presence focus is 'Pulled' so that the foreground character becomes out of focus in favour of the background character being in focus.

This also can happen in revers.

Tip:

Don't do this too often. Only use it to make a point. I watched an episode of the BBC's Downton Abbey where two characters in conversation throughout a 2 minute scene repeatedly had the focus pulled on their individual performances. It was irritating, boring and unnecessary. If we as an audience become aware of camera tricks, it is a distraction from your story telling. Don't fall into the trap.

Hire or Buy?**Q. Should I hire or buy equipment?**

A. Hiring is a very good option, especially as technology changes by the second.

Advantages:

- a/ access to the latest equipment with advice and choice.
- b/ back up should technical faults arise.
- c/ handing equipment back means you have not invested in a depreciating commodity.

Disadvantages:

- a/ you'll need some time to familiarise crew with new equipment.
- b/ will have to stick to time frame of hire (within budget).
- c/ you may fall in love with it and not want to return it!

Chapter 3

Editing Q & A



Editing Software

Q. What software should I use?

A. Today, Adobe Premiere Pro with the Adobe Suite offers the most creative professional option for a reasonable budget. Integration between many complimentary programmes that include Adobe After Effects and Adobe Photoshop have made it a choice for many departments at the BBC.

Final Cut Pro has been popular amongst universities and is another option, but unlike Adobe it will require plug-ins to compete with Adobe. It is also only available for Apple Mac Computers whereas Adobe cater for both PC and Mac.

Avid became the premiere non-linear editing system used by the TV and Film industry. It is what the above are inspired by, and still today it is the crème de la crème. If you can afford it, buy it.

Whichever you choose, make sure the computer/laptop is a high enough specification to cope with the demands of editing moving image. To guarantee the specification being suitable find one of the several specialist companies selling moving image editing hardware.

Technique

Q. What technique would you recommend to edit?

A. a/ You may have every shot planned and filmed according to the method I outline in Chapter 4. In which case set the shots out on the timeline as designed.

However, you may also like to try the following method in the edit:

b/ With the script in front of you, lay on the timeline a rough edit of the master shots for each sequence. That will tell you the continuum of the story. When that is done the fun starts.

Editing needs to be intuitive:

Now watch the master shot timeline stopping when you feel it would be interesting to see a Medium Close Up, Close Up, or Reaction Shot etc., of a character. Insert it and carry on. When you play it back, again intuition will tell you how long each shot needs to be, before a cut to another view. Eventually it will appear seamless (as long as continuity has been enforced!).

Tip:

If you give the same footage to different editors without a storyboard their intuition will create a choice of different shots showing a surprising variety of inspired interpretations.

Parallel Editing

Q. What is parallel Editing?

A. A tremendous way to build tension. Alternate between two locations and characters who are eventually going to meet up unexpectedly too soon. The man on the way back from the pub – the wife preparing a poisonous concoction for him to drink on his return. See script ‘Give Peace A Chance’ p.??

Writer, Actor Directors

Q. If I am the director and editor or even the writer what will I have to be aware of?

A. You will need an objective opinion on the final cut. It will probably be over long and unclear in places where you know the script inside out. Listen to the objective opinion. Ignore it at your peril. A directors cut is always longer, not necessarily for the better.

Q. What if I also act in the film?

A. if you are also an actor, then my advice is let someone else edit your scenes. As an actor you will be self-critical cutting out much of the wheat in favour of the chaff because you don’t like the way you said a line or the way you looked.

Colour Grading

A valuable post production advantage with editing software is the amount of atmosphere an editor can add with colour grading. As long as the shots have been lit moderately well, then an expert Colour Editor can, working alongside the director improve the look of a picture almost beyond recognition from its original.

Foley

Named after Jack Foley (Fig 1) who perfected the technique.



Jack Foley (1891-1967)

Fig 1

The ‘**Psycho Shower**’ sound of knife into flesh is what we call ‘Foley’, created on that occasion by a knife stabbing a melon. ‘Foley’ is essential to all films creating a heightened reality. Often the actual sound recorded on set (known as Diegetic sound) is not enough. Good ‘Foley’ will add another sensory dimension to your film.

Music

The ‘psycho shower scene’ composed by Bernard Herrmann is now an instantly recognisable piece that will as soon as it is heard bring to mind the sequence. (any sound not created by a radio, music player, dialogue etc., that would be understood to be coming from the scene being viewed is known as Non-Diegetic sound as is the case with the psycho music because it is not shown to be coming from a radio in the scene).

Tip:

If you could find someone to compose suitable music (sometimes created electronically) for your script it would be a wise solution to avoid copyright and too familiar copyright free compositions. .

Copyright music

Either buy permission to use copyrighted music or buy copyright free music.

Do Not use any music without permission. You will not get away with it. The least that will happen (if not taken to court) is, you'll go to view your uploaded film on You Tube finding a blank audio due to you having violated copyright

Tip:

a/ Do not fall into the trap of putting music behind everything; smothering important **Foley** and making everything bland. Equally make sure any lyric to the music is not confusing the audiences' ear while dialogue is being spoken.

b/ Do not be tempted to put cross dissolves between shots. Only use to show the passing of time or in a montage of shots. Clean cuts are preferable if in doubt.

Chapter 4

A Challenge

Planning (pre-production) Filmming (production) Editing (post production)

Here is a project: showing you a way of planning and shooting a scene.

When your pre-production work is complete, you might like to cast, film & edit it: adding music and Foley; having 'painted with light'; directed your actors; and thus having created plenty of atmosphere for a first viewing

THE THREE WISE DETECTIVES

FADE IN

A _____ /
ESTABLISHING MASTER SHOT

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL (OFF)
She said she left it for us to look at
on the table.

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL and DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL Enter room.

B _____ /
MASTER SHOT

Seeing envelope on table. They both sit close to it and each other at table.

D _____ /
2 SHOT MCU

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
(opens envelope and Reads to
self)

D _____ /
PANNING TO SINGLE CU ON HEAR...

Guilty - full confession.

Handing over the hand written confession.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
 (Reading)
 Yes - guilty. When is she coming
 in?

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
 Any minute now.

Long pause.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
 Did you hear anything?

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
 No. You see anything?

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
 I don't think I could have done.

Pause.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
 How do you think she disposed of the
 body?

The door opens. DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL walks in and slowly
 sits down.

DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL
 So, you have my confession.

She puts her hands together as if to be handcuffed.

I brought my tooth brush.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
 Yes - but I don't think I saw
 anything.

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
 Nor I - I don't think I heard
 anything.

Passing the confession to DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL.

DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL

Long pause.

Then I haven't spoken about it
 with you?

DETECTIVES SEE & HEAR nod in agreement.

DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL

Thank you.

Getting a tin waste paper bin. She takes out a lighter and burns the confession.

See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. The bastards cremated!

She goes to the door.

Thanks to three wise detectives.

She takes out a toothbrush from her bag.

I won't be needing this.

She exits.

DETECTIVES SEE & HEAR go to the burning bin, pick it up, look at it.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL

So now we know.

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL

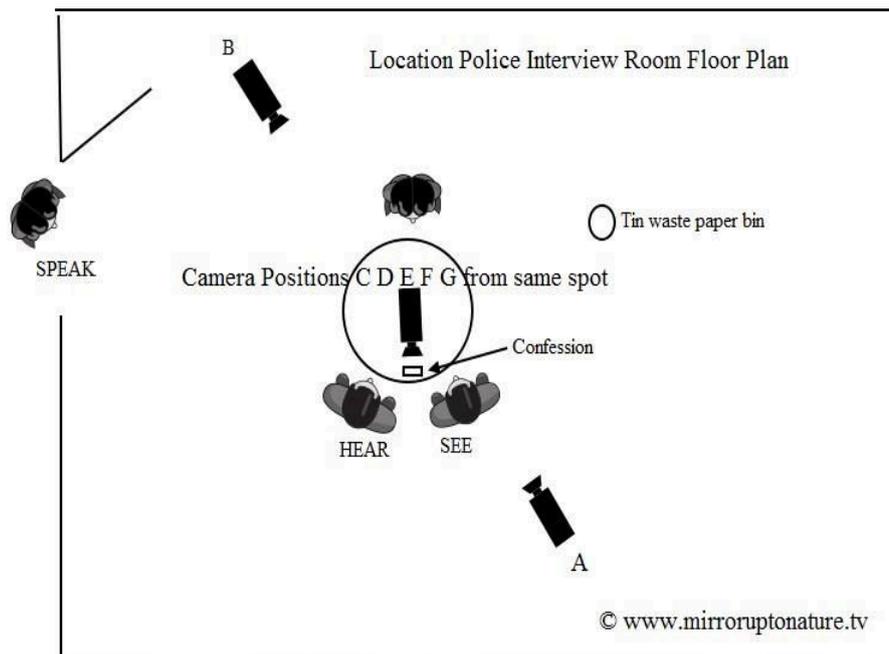
No evidence.

FADE OUT

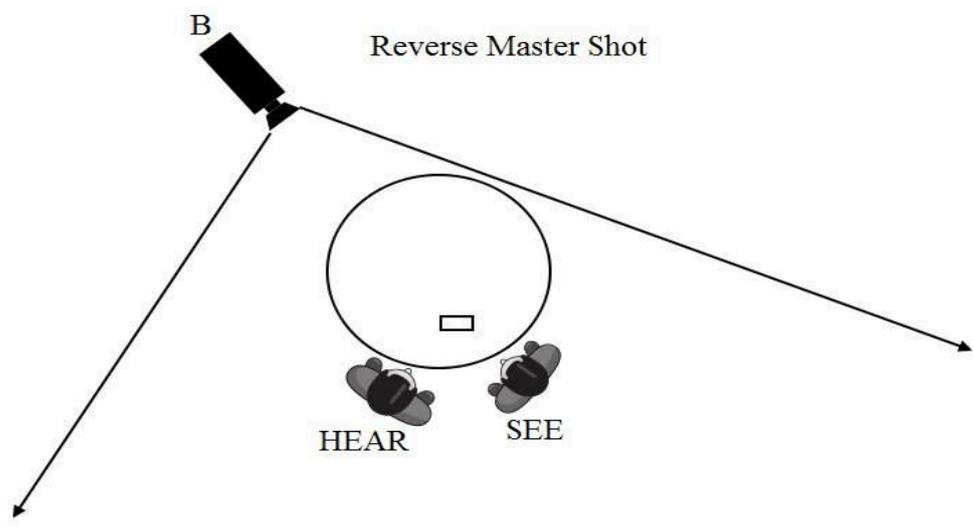
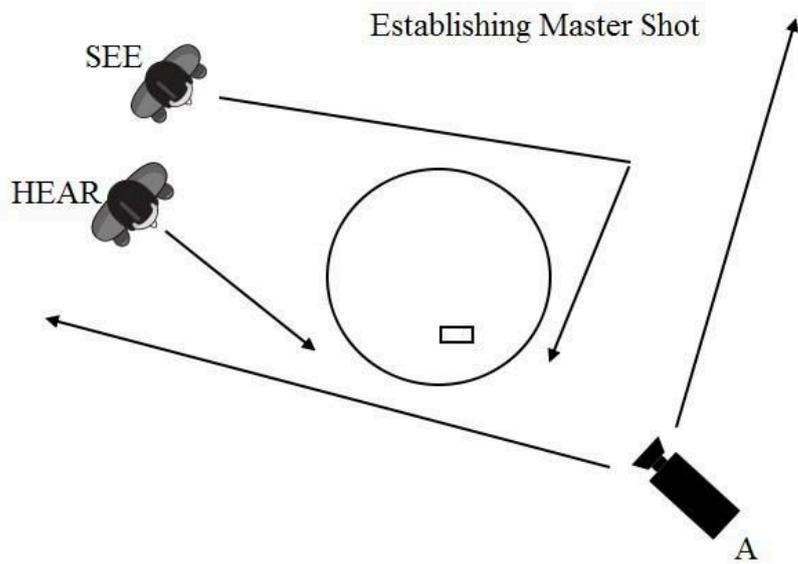
I have planned it to a certain point for you showing you a method of pre-production you might find it useful to adopt for your future productions as follows...

- 1. Create a Location Ground Plan** like the following for each sequence of your film. If your film revisited this location, then characters and camera positions may be different, so another copy of this Location Ground Plan would need to be planned and

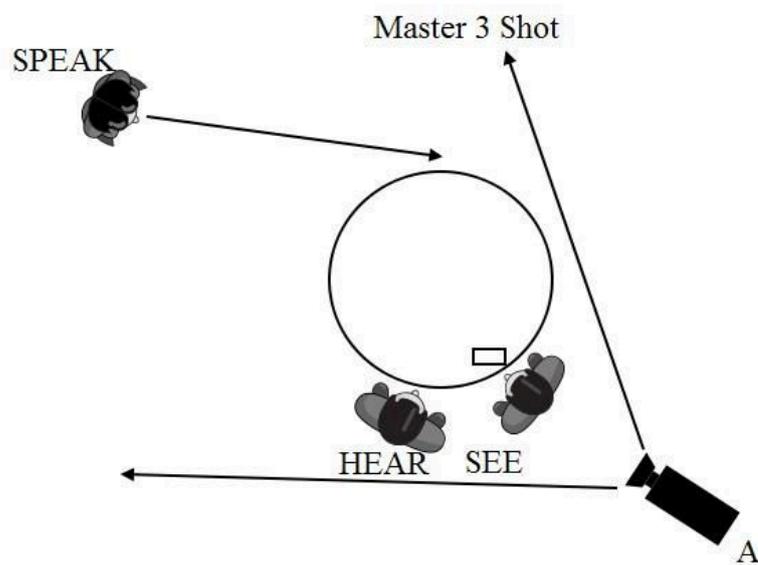
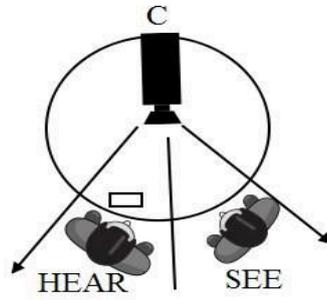
drawn up.



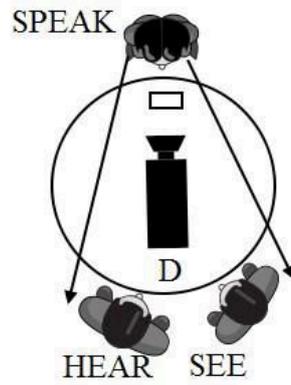
2. Design character and camera positions



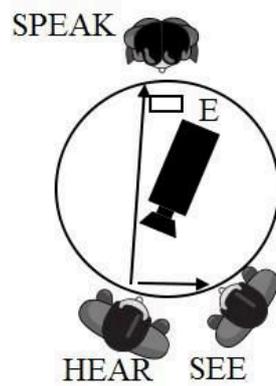
2 Shot panning to a Single Shot as each reacts



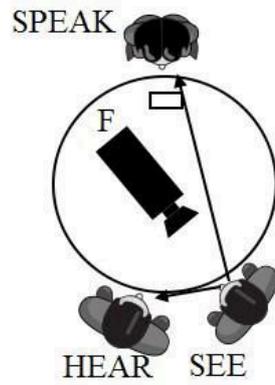
SPEAK centre of screen looking Right of camera to HEAR & Left of camera to SEE



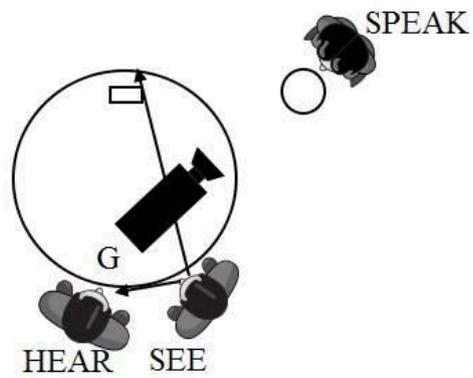
HEAR placed centre screen looking left of camera to SPEAK & right to SEE



SEE placed centre screen looking right of camera to SPEAK & left to HEAR



SPEAK burns confession



So to this point I have done the work for you. In previous pages I have explained the challenge of more than 2 characters in a scene. Here we have the question once again of...

Q. How can I make it look as if they are talking to each other?

A. It is partly solved with the camera positions I have designed for you A- G. It's all about where the eyes are looking (eye lines)! Screen Right & Screen Left are Camera Right & Camera Left: for this exercise with camera positions C,D,E, & F, I have described the action from how you would direct the actors from their point of view.

Now, you complete the challenge using the following additional method to make sure they are looking at each other when needed:

3. Copy the unmarked *Three Wise Detectives* script from the script section of the book (p.??) and copy the blank storyboard at the back of the book (p.??) making several copies.
4. Decide which camera position and shot size you would like to see for action and dialogue prior to each cut marking the script as I started to, as can be seen on the script on the previous page.

Adopt the method there, drawing a line on the script naming the camera position A-G and the shot type underneath with a forward slash for cut to----- / that may be in the middle of a line of dialogue----- / and remember film is often 'reaction' to what we hear being said, so you could cut----- / away from dialogue to someone listening and reacting.

Mark your script in the same manner throughout as you decide the shots and dialogue from the camera positions on the Location Ground Plan.

5. The storyboard will help you visualize where characters are looking and to assign dialogue. It will also help you time, pace, and appreciate how many shots the scene may be edited to. You may surprise yourself with how many shots you create for the scene.

Tip:

a/ as SPEAK leaves you might cut in the order of camera positions A 'C' B. Camera position 'C' with eye lines following her, would have to be in-between A & B otherwise SPEAK will suddenly be walking out screen left (A) then right (B) having broken the 180 degree line of action.

b/ make sure that actors do not jump out at the viewer by 'spiking' the camera lens

c/ you may want to insert a Point Of View shot (POV) of the confession being cremated in the bin from either HEAR & SEE's POV or SPEAK's.

Chapter 5

Learning lines

Many young actors that I meet seem to have no understanding of the discipline of learning text accurately. Time is not always on the actors side for learning lines. But if it is, and a photographic memory is not in evidence, the following is an enjoyable way to learn small to very large amounts of script or even study for exams accurately!

Learning Lines for a Whole Script or Speech (the easy enjoyable way to learn)

Trust your brain!

1) It is vital that you learn the text of a script accurately as the playwright/screenwriter has written it, word for word, paying particular attention to punctuation. It is never acceptable to improvise the playwright's/screenwriter's text.

2) Use a dictionary to find out the meaning and pronunciation of words you do not understand.

3) Read the play/screenplay in full that your speech or part are in. This will give you clues to your character. It will help you make emotional connections when remembering lines and allow you to create a believable characterization.

4) Now; familiar with your text, the fun of learning your part can begin!

a/ Today, spend 20 minutes looking at as many lines as you feel comfortable trying to commit to memory (about 10 lines, a paragraph or page of dialogue)

b/ After about 20 minutes, as your brain is beginning to tire of this repetition, select the following part of the text that you feel comfortable with attempting to commit to memory; start to learn that.

c/ After another 20 minutes when you begin to tire of the process completely – give yourself a break – have a cup of tea and biscuit – forget about trying to remember; take time out to relax for about 20 minutes

d/ Now – go back to learning the text you started your learning session with. Apply the same technique with the 20 minute changes for a second time, right up to the time for a second break.

e/ Take your 20 minute break as before.

f/ When you start back, this time you are not going to look at the part of text you have been learning. You are to leave that until the same time the following day – when you will apply exactly the same process you have been practicing today.

g/ And then after your following days practice you leave the part of text you have been

learning until the same time a week later!

h/ Now today you continue learning the text from where you had your last break following the same routine until you have had enough of learning for the day.

- 5) This way you are giving the same amount of time to all of the text and not panicking your brain worrying about how slowly you are learning your lines. You will become familiar with the whole text, equally well. Learning will start to be fun! Your brain will be egging you on to learn the next bit, then the next bit, then the next bit. Your brain and you will not get board or frustrated or intimidated by the amount to learn – your brain will be excited to learn more!
- 6) A week later; you start working through your role, speaking the lines out loud following the same process as in the previous week. Only working that part of the text that you were working on at the specific time in the past week.
- 7) You will be surprised by how much your mind has sorted the lines out in the time you have not looked at the text and at how stimulating the learning process is becoming.
- 8) Work through the day and week catching up with where you were in the text at about the same time and day in the previous week allotting the same time and process. Not forgetting to follow the following day process before leaving possibly for another week if you feel that is what you need.
- 9) You will now begin to know all of the text equally well. The lines will begin to flow. You will know the end of your part as well as you know the beginning and middle.
- 10) Now you can enjoy the freedom of becoming secure with an accurate memory of the text; freedom that will now allow you to take risks – experiment with line readings – characterization – and take direction!

You will now have given yourself the opportunity creatively, to develop a true interpretation of your character leading to an engaging performance.

Chapter 6

Mirror Up To Nature

The heretics eye view of acting theory
for
Directors and Actors

The late American comedian George Burns joked “Great acting requires truth, passion, and realism. If you can fake those, you’ve got it made”.

The pursuit of truth and realism in acting has led to a lot theories on how to achieve its reality in performance. It is where in my and others opinion a great deal of time is wasted in the classroom and workshops searching for the holly grail of how to act. It is an excellent way to occupy students, spending endless time discussing and emoting childhood memories but it delays, the real work that is needed, that of working on texts, learning lines, voice work, taking direction and performing.

To take us away from the dogmatism of theory, I would like you to consider the views of two of America’s leading screen & stage acting practitioners and one leading English director whose opinions reclaim the actors craft minus the theory.

Firstly, Harold Guskin who is an actor, director, and New York City acting coach who has taught for over thirty years many grateful stars on repeat commissions. These include; Kevin Kline; Glen Close; James Gandolfini; Bruce Willis; to name but a few. In his book ‘How To Stop Acting’ with a forward by the English actor David Suchet, he states...

...when I rejected analysis and technique, I found that my imagination was free, full, and available to me again, and surprisingly, so were my emotions-without prolonged work on emotional recall.⁴

‘Emotional recall’ being a major part of Stanislavsky’s (1863 – 1938)⁵ theory of acting ‘system’, where it is called ‘emotional memory’. Stanislavsky’s ‘system’ is now known in Britain and America as The Method having first been introduced by “...two of his protégés Michael Chekov (1891 – 1955) and Richard Boleslavsky (1889 – 1937), and subsequently adapted to the American actor by Lee Strasberg (1901 – 1982) and other members of the Group Theatre in 1931...”⁶. It is Lee Strasburg who is known as the father of The Method and it is at this point in Americas theatrical history that Jerzy Grotowski disparagingly states that Stanislavsky has been “...assassinated after death by the vast number of those seeking to crystallize the stages of his research into the perfect prescription for achieving results.”⁷. Stanislavsky was always questioning his work with “...permanent self reform...”⁸. Since his death actors have been trained (perhaps more accurately – brainwashed) to adopt his system that has been developed into The Method by Lee Strasburg. Strasburg’s contribution has been to create psycho-dramatic improvisation that feeds off ‘emotional memory’. Consequently actors attend workshops with drama teachers where more appropriately the workshop leader

⁴ GUSKIN.H. (2003) How To Stop Acting. Faber & Faber. 2004 p.39.

⁵ STANISLAVSKY,K.(1958) An Actor Prepares. pp.156-67. 16th Edition.Theatre Arts Books. London.

⁶ ROOSE EVANS, James (1991) Experimental theatre, p.6. Routledge. London.

⁷ KUMIEGA, J, (1985) The Theatre Of Grotowski. P.110. Methuen.London.

⁸ Ibid

should be a psychiatrist. Kenneth Tynan was writing as long ago as 1961 about a production he saw at the Moscow Art Theatre "...This is Stanislavsky without Fraud; physiological acting without the psychiatric glosses, beloved of so many American 'Method' actors..."⁹.

So as far back as the 1950's American actors were being imbued with pseudopsychology misleadingly inspired by Stanislavsky's hijacked 'system' under the guise of The Method'. Now is the time I hope for The Method to lose its foothold on actor training. As Guskin states in his book Stanislavsky

formulated his ideas about acting in the late nineteenth century, when Chekov, Dostoyevski, and Strinburg were writing... he developed his 'special technique' in reaction to the general acting style of his day, which was all elegant movement, elocution, and overly dramatic displays of characters emotions that bore not a touch of truthfulness...but we are not the children of Stanislavsky's theatre, and as contemporary actors and audiences, we take it for granted that acting should be real and natural.¹⁰

Interestingly the two protégés of Stanislavsky mentioned formerly who introduced his system to America had already broken away from Stanislavsky's Moscow Arts Theatre in search of a more **theatrical form** than the **natural style** 'the system' was producing.

So what does Guskin suggest should be put in The Methods place? Well, simply, spontaneity. In his book he talks about creating character "...the character is simply the actor's continual response to the author's lines, an on-going exploration that remains completely personal for him, from first reading through final performance".¹¹ This requires spontaneity and a freedom to be able to "...be continually exploring the role by freely responding to the dialogue before rehearsal, in rehearsal, and, - I know this is a controversial notion - throughout his performance on stage or film".¹² Indeed to many directors and productions this could cause a threat to the status quo. However, 'controversial' as it may be, a genuinely intuitive and gifted actor needs this freedom to be able to live on the edge of the text tempting the audience in all directions as the moment inspires. This is what makes the gifted actor, magnetically excitingly dangerous, to watch. As Guskin says "we have to respond personally to the script with whatever comes, no matter how foolish it is to others or even to us. The only rule is you must never physically hurt another actor or act out a physically threatening way that enters into the other actors space".¹³

This freedom to appear foolish in exploration of character is absolutely essential. The rehearsal should be a time when the actor can feel free to make an absolute fool of himself - even appear miss-cast. Of course, with all the actors exploring their text in this way, bedlam could ensue. It is for this reason that the objective eye of a director is needed to appropriate the wheat from the chaff. That he will have plenty of wheat to choose from will be a direct result of the freedom he has created in the rehearsal room or on the film set. Guskin is renowned for his guidance to many of the aforementioned actors, who approach him with the script of their latest movie or stage play. Obviously experienced actors feel the need for this

⁹ TYNAN, K. (1961) *Curtains*. Longmans, green, London, and Atheneum, New York. p.21

¹⁰ GUSKIN.H. (2004) *How To Stop Acting*. Faber & Faber. 2004 p.38.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p.48.

¹² *Ibid.* pp 41 - 42.

¹³ *Ibid.* p 51.

one to one guidance prior to production rehearsals. How their directors feel is not mentioned, if indeed they have been aware of Guskin's enormous input into their finished products over the years often leading to awards for these stellar students. Perhaps it is an indictment of the all powerful director in film, TV and theatre that actors as famous as Jane Fonda, Peter Fonda, Bruce Willis et al should have to gain their courage to try new approaches to a text away from the homogenous creative process of production. If they did know I can hear the cry of 'Oh – I see Guskin has got at you again'. Well personally as a director, I would prefer to have to say that than to hear an actor ask "As this vegetable character I'm playing, of the Tomato, what is my motivation to sit?" as Dustin Hofman's actor character in Tootsie inquired. The Guskin actor would have been offering plenty of 'spontaneous' choices for the director as the Tomato.

Secondly, we come to the great writer/director and sometime actor David Mamet. His book 'True and False' is delightfully subtitled 'Heresy and Common sense for the Actor'. David Mamet has penned among many stage and screen successes 'Glengarry Glen Ross' (for which he won the Pulitzer Prize) and 'Oleanna'. He is a great playwright/screenwriter. So to read from him

the only reason to rehearse a play is to learn to perform the play ...it is not to "explore the meaning of the play"- the play, for the actor, *has* no meaning beyond its performance. It is not to "investigate the life of the character." There are just lines on the page. ¹⁴

To read this from a playwright who can only want the best for his text in performance should be liberating for all actors exhausting themselves with The Method and other like minded theories for performance.

David Mamet has had bad experiences of actors reading too much into his written text. The actor buries himself beneath a subtext of 'emotional memory' to the detriment of communicating the lines the playwright has written. Sanford Meisner ¹⁵ (1905 – 1997) a founder actor director member of the group theatre in 1931 with Lee Strasburg, later at the time of its disbandment in 1939 remarked that "Actors are not guinea pigs to be manipulated, dissected, let alone in a purely negative way. Our approach was not organic, that is to say not healthy."¹⁶ However this did not stop him from developing his own 'Meisner Technique' once again based on Stanislavsky and leaving in his wake a Meisner Academy ¹⁷ a centre for the training of actors. Alarming to David Mamet, Meisner later stated

...it takes 20 years to become an actor. It does not guarantee stardom or an agent or even a living. You must be excited about the work and still feel the thrill go up your spine when you read "The Collected Works" of ...Lee Strasberg's "Dream of Passion", "Stella Adler On Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekhov", ...The Life and Work of Konstantin Stanislavsky,.. It is the blood that pumps throughout your veins..¹⁸.

¹⁴ MAMET, D. (1999) True & False. Vintage Books. Mamet.1998. p 52.

¹⁵ <http://www.themeisnercenter.com/meisnerBio.html>

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

Of course, ‘excitement’ and ‘thrill’ are essential for the dedication and passion that being a successful actor requires. This is all possible though, without the brow beating analysis and self introspection that those who train actors often inculcate. Mamet is scathing about this ‘paint by numbers’ preoccupation with playmaking.

A play can be rehearsed quickly, by a group of competent actors who know the lines, and are prepared, with the help of the director, to find the simple actions associated with them and to be arranged into an appropriate stage picture. If this is so, why squander months in rehearsal and years in school? The reason is economic’¹⁹

This complication of what really is a simple craft if genuine talent resides in an actor has been an obfuscation that benefits the economic and statistical life of institutions that run drama training courses. The indoctrination of theory that produces

...the paint-by-number mechanical actor...judging himself and his performance constantly... by preordained checklist...so the audience is robbed of any immediacy, and intimacy, of the unforeseen, of those few things, in short, those sole things capable of rendering a performance of a play superior to a reading of the text.²⁰

Mamet himself teaches promulgating scathingly that

The paint – by – numbers analysis of emotion memory, sense memory, character dissection, and so on, is designed for the hobbyist who can take the piece apart at her leisure with never a thought of performance. Its merit is in its potentially endless consumption of time.²¹

Of primary concern in the future of education in this area must be the text, voice production with elocution, movement and relaxation, rehearsal leading to performance. It is I think, worth noting that the Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski who has had a considerable influence on contemporary theatre, not only required his actors to be physically fit but also exceptionally vocally adroit. He was particularly demanding with regard to diction (elocution) “...The best training in diction is obtained in one’s personal life. The actor must pay continual attention to his pronunciation, even outside the environment of his work...”.²² Most welcomingly, we can add to that, the anecdote told in Peter Barkworth’s book ‘About Acting’ where he relates a conversation between the actors Robert Stephens, Colin Blakely and two visiting Russian Moscow Arts Theatre actors who had been trained by Stanislavsky. Blakely asks “were there any [things that Stanislavsky said] which stand out particularly in your memory?”. The two actors thought long and hard and then one said “Actually, I do remember something he often said, ‘The three most important things for an actor are voice, voice and yet more voice’”.²³

The skill of acting can only be improved with the opportunity to, rehearse and perform regularly with screenplay and play texts. The discipline of regularly working with a text and an audience, a text and a camera, is the only way to learn the craft of acting. It is a vocation that actors will never feel that they know it all in. There is not an actor that you can meet no

¹⁹ MAMET, D. (1999) *True & False*. Vintage Books. Mamet.1998. p 52.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p..54.

²¹ *Ibid.* p54.

²² GROTOWSKI, J. (1968) *Towards A Poor Theatre*. A Methuen paperback. .p.137.

²³ BARKWORTH, P. (1980) *About Acting*. Methuen Drama. p.95.

matter how long in the tooth who will not tell the listener that they are still learning new tricks.

Many actors who are introduced to Stanislavski, Lee Strasburg's *The Method* and many other theories of acting in the quest for 'Mirror Up To Nature' realism tend to end up looking and sounding as if they are 'over thinking'.

So, thirdly, the following is some excellent advice for actors/directors from the great director Tyrone Guthrie (1900-1971) who as you will see has another term for this 'over thinking' and the same observations as Guskin and Mamet...

Real life is full of stagey incidents and stagey behaviour, and there is no particular merit in the sort of acting which shuns staginess, unless it clearly substitutes something more interesting and moving. This is what 'method' acting rarely does. Too often it produces tiny manifestation which appear to be symptoms of constipation rather than any recognisable emotion. This is not because 'The Method' is wrong. It is because too often its practitioners attempt to apply amateur psychoanalysis and then to express the result with inadequate technical means. There is no great point, so it seems to me, in an actor having splendid, original and pure ideas which they have never learned to express: no point in having 'know what' unless they have adequate 'know how'.²⁴

'...Stagey incidents and stagey behaviour...'? I hear 'The Method' acolyte ask. Well yes, Patrick Tucker in his seminal 'Secrets of Screen Acting'²⁵ points out that the 'over acting part' will usually be the speaking too loudly.

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that there were many brilliant performances on screen by the likes of Cary Grant, James Stewart, Ingrid Bergman, Greta Garbo, Katherine Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart, Vivien Leigh, Joan Fontaine, Bette Davis, Hattie McDaniel, Sidney Poitier, Spencer Tracy, Laurence Olivier et al from before the famed Actors Studios influence took hold. There is no better example than 'It's a Wonderful Life' made in 1946 with a very large cast including James Stewart, Donna Reed, Henry Warner, Lionel Barrymore, Henry Travers, all giving supreme screen performances.

I posit, that still, today, the most valuable training an actor should acquire is voice production. They need to learn how to neutralise any accent they may have, thus becoming a vocal blank canvass, that will allow a variety of characters they are cast in, to be painted on it, freeing their imaginations to create for each character an individual voice to speak with. David Suchet & Meryl Streep are great examples of actors who have done just that with the variety of roles they have played.

²⁴ GUTHRIE, Tyrone. (1971) *Tyrone Guthrie On Acting*. Studio Vista. London.. p.78

²⁵ TUCKER, P. (2015) *Secrets of Screen Acting*. Routledge Arts.

Chapter 7

Original Short Film Screenplays to Make, Adapt or

Workshop Film Acting Techniques

with

mostly small casts, that for many allow for; colour blind casting; male/female; same sex casting options

SCREENPLAYS

Alfred Hitchcock said that the three most vital elements of a film are ‘the script, the script, the script.’ It always seems to me, to be a severe anomaly by the film industry that they do not put the screenwriters name above the title. Posthumously William Shakespeare usually gets such billing. We can thoroughly enjoy a film, be able to name its stars and possibly the director, but seldom the screenwriter, without whom our escapism could not have happened.

Screenplays can go through many drafts and often this can mean a change of screenwriter. Screenwriter William Goldman (The Princess Bride, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, All The Presidents Men, Misery and many more) had the ending of his film Marathon Man rewritten by the equally famous screenwriter Robert Towne (Shampoo, The Last Detail, Mission Impossible 1 & 2 etc.,) who in turn had the ending of his Oscar winning original screenplay changed by his director Roman Polanski.

The life of a screenwriter is tough. Goldman has written *Adventures in the Screen Trade* and its sequel *What Lie Did I Tell?* both are hilarious, heartbreaking, frustrating accounts of his experience at the top of his craft that are well worth reading for those who want to write.

It is not my intention here to give any instruction on writing screenplays other than to say: first find the subject/idea, then - research, research, research. Do not start writing the characters talking to each other until you have rung the research around the subject dry. Always put yourself in your audiences position viewing it. Answer the ‘what if?’ scenario’s, and apply, who, what, where, when, how and why does the story, do the characters, develop as they do ? – is there a through line of believability. If there isn’t and the characters all wake up from a dream, the audience will feel cheated and know that the screenwriter’s imagination couldn’t come up with an ending.

The following screenplays are for rehearsing with, adapting, or in the case of some, you may feel worth trying your hand at creating a short film from, as they are.

Good Luck

ARTHUR

Genre: Whimsical Tragedy of Old Age

Casting: 2 Females

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Afternoon Tea - continuity and eating! Notice actors seldom are seen to be actually eating - usually playing with food about to eat. There is a good reason for that.

Sipping and pouring the tea will perhaps be safer options for most of the scene.

There needs to be plenty of silences so GRANDMA's thread of any memory has faded away.

Possible addition: they get up and start to go before GRANDMA stops to deliver her last line.

FADE IN

INT. TEA ROOMS - DAY

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW and GRANDMA are sitting having afternoon tea and cakes.

GRANDMA

You should lose some weight.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

(Amused)

No - Grandma, it's because I'm pregnant.

GRANDMA

oh - I see. Well that's alright then.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

You're going to be a grandma again.

GRANDMA

I am?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

Do you remember your other grandchildren?

(CONTINUED)

GRANDMA

No - ones going to be enough!

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

You've already got two.

GRANDMA

Well - what ever you say dear. Is Arthur waiting in the car?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

We've come for a nice afternoon tea and bite to eat. Arthur is dead.

GRANDMA

Oh dear - is he - when did that happen?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

A couple of years ago now.

GRANDMA

Really? I used to be married to him.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

Yes I know - he was much loved by us all.

GRANDMA

We had a son you know.

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

I know - I married him - John.

GRANDMA

John ?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

He's the father of your two grandchildren and this little one to be.

GRANDMA

(laughing)

I thought you needed to lose some weight!

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

(Laughing)

I will after its born.

GRANDMA

What?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

Lose weight.

GRANDMA

Yes dear - I wasn't going to mention it - but now you have - Perhaps you shouldn't have so many of those. Is Arthur waiting in the car?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

No grandma - he died.

GRANDMA

Really? Oh dear that's a shame. Who got the money?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

John looks after it.

GRANDMA

Who got the money?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

John has got power of attorney.

GRANDMA

John? Do you know him?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

Yes I married him.

GRANDMA

Did you. Oh. Nobody tells me anything. Did I go to the wedding?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

Yes- you wore a lovely dress.

GRANDMA

Arthur liked it. Is he in the car? He always waits in the car. Doesn't like shopping.

Do I know you?

DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

I'm Arthur's daughter in law.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

4.

GRANDMA

Oh - that's alright then. Have you
eaten dear?

FADE OUT

AS GOOD AS GOLD

Genre: Comic Drama

Casting: 2 male 1 Female

Filming and Acting Challenge:

All three characters need to have charm. The WOMAN and MAN sex appeal and chemistry between them.

Directing this piece: reaction shots, pace and tension have to be skillfully handled. Tension between the characters when they reveal their dissembling needs to leave the audience believing the next move until it quickly changes.

Lighting will be essential to create the atmosphere from dusk to night in a grave yard.

Realistic props for the gold bars will require accurate research and prop making. Possibly only two bars need to be made.

FADE IN

EXT. RURAL RAILWAY STATION - DUSK

We see a couple in their twenties. The WOMAN is marching with sum urgency the MAN. She is holding a gun to his body, hidden by her coat that is slung between them over their linked arms. We see the gun passers by would not.

A DRIVER late 30's is slowly moving his parked car to leave when the WOMAN opens the rear nearside door and pushes the Man in, sliding in behind him shutting the door behind her and pointing the gun at the DRIVERS head.

INT. CAR - DUSK

WOMAN

Drive!

The DRIVER slowly starts to move off saying

DRIVER

That's not a real gun.

The WOMAN points the gun at the front passenger seat floor and fires a shot. SFX: BANG

OK. It's a real gun.

(CONTINUED)

A PEDESTRIAN catches the DRIVER'S eye from the off side in shock. The Driver whose window is open covers by smiling and shouting

Backfire!

Where are we going?

WOMAN

I don't know.

To MAN

Where are we going?

MAN

I suppose you want to go to where it is?

WOMAN

Yes. Where is it?

DRIVER

Can you make up your minds. There's a cross roads ahead.

MAN

Turn right.

DRIVER

Who's your lady friend?

MAN

Allow me to introduce you - this is my wife Alison. Ali when on more friendly terms. Take the next left.

DRIVER

Very romantic.

MAN

It was - we met on my yacht in the Caribbean. This little darling here was my armed bodyguard.

DRIVER

So...she's for real.

WOMAN

Yes. I'm for real. Drive.

MAN

Straight ahead.

(CONTINUED)

DRIVER

Kinky!

MAN

Perhaps that was the attraction...
but at this moment...the fear
factor has rendered me completely
impotent.

DRIVER

You and me both. Do you have to
keep pointing that thing at us?

WOMAN

At least you now both know what its
like to have something hard
pointing at you when you're not in
the mood.

DRIVER

Oh dear. You must have really upset
her. I've heard of money can't buy
you love - but this is ridiculous.
Did you lose it all?

MAN

No. But it looks as if I'm about
to. Pull up on the left there
please.Divorce. Ali wants the
money. Ali-mony.

The car pulls up and stops.

WOMAN

This is a grave yard.

MAN

All good things must come to an
end.

DRIVER

Well. Count me out of it - I'm not
good!

WOMAN

Shut up. Give me the keys.

DRIVER hands her the keys.

Now. Where is it?

MAN

You'd better follow me.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

Ok. Both get out.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

WOMAN opens nearside door quickly and covers exterior of car with gun. MAN opens offside back door gets out. DRIVER gets out. MAN walks through church yard gate.

EXT.CHURCHYARD - NIGHT

WOMAN follows covering with gun DRIVER and MAN who is leading.

DRIVER

Look. I'm no marriage guidance counselor. So I don't see how I can help you. Perhaps I'll go now?

MAN stops by a newly interred grave that as yet has no headstone, only a temporary plaque in the ground. The earth is mounded 10 inches above in the shape of the coffin below.

MAN

As I said 'all good things must come to an end'.

DRIVER

DRIVER bends down and reads name on plaque
James Owen 1979-2015.

MAN

Shame he had to die. I was rather close to him. Not many others were. Only the 4 pall-bearers at his funeral to carry the coffin, attended.

DRIVER

DRIVER scrapes away some earth to reveal a Kilo Gold Bar. Standing up to MAN holding bar.

So at last we meet, James. Dead man walking.

MAN

What? Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

DRIVER

Tell him.

WOMAN

Sorry James. Our driver today is Detective Inspector Tim from the fraud squad. He's my boss. I started investigating your lucrative internet frauds when first sent to guard you over 2 happy years of marriage ago.

DRIVER

Your own death certificate - just another string to your bow. Luckily you loved the honey I sent you.

MAN

And now the trap is complete?

Pause.

Pass me the gun honey.

WOMAN passes him the gun.

And yours Tim.

WOMAN takes it off him and keeps it.

Perhaps you'd be kind enough to help us load your car with - how many bars did I say darling? 95 1. Kilo bars of gold in the coffin. I think that's how much I weighed when put in the ground. And a little extra on top. Over £25,000 a bar.

WOMAN

Sorry Tim. My cover was blown soon after we started dating. Honey trap to head over heels love trap.

DRIVER

Well, I'm very pleased to see it. You see, James and I went to the same school. We struck a masonic deal. I'd get our department off his back for a 'reasonable return'.

Only you as the only other person aware of his activities were so fired up to make your first big catch, we had to test your commitment against your oath of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DRIVER (cont'd)
departmental honesty and your
proclamation of 'till death us do
part' honey vows.

It seems she really does love you
James. Not so sure on what she was
planning on doing with me.

Picking up a bar of gold,
Her record said she was as good as
gold, and she's proved it!

WOMAN grabs gun from MAN and now holds a gun in each hand.

WOMAN
You bastards! You were both in on
this from the beginning? Sorry
boys. But I'm not a member of any
masonic lodge. I think I deserve
all of this to be all mine. Now,
tell me, why shouldn't I kill you
both?

Threatening both of them. A gun in each hand.

MAN
It is quite heavy.

WOMAN
A reasonable return?

DRIVER
Yes. I return and close this
investigation as inconclusive
because James died. Work a few more
years and retire early for my
'reasonable return'. (Which I am
sure even you would prefer to give
me, rather than draw attention to a
shot body in a grave yard).

DRIVER takes guns from her.

EXT. YACHT - SUNSET

We see MAN and WOMAN cuddled together drinking champagne on
yacht.

DRIVER V.O
You sale away into the sunset with
a new 'till death us do part'
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DRIVER V.O (cont'd)
identity. You having gone for a
long swim out to sea leaving a
suicide note unable to cope with
the sad loss of your first
husband. Who I am sure before his
passing has also graciously created
a death certificate for your
demise.

Perhaps I should take up marriage
guidance.

MAN
I knew he wouldn't let me down. At
school we were as thick as thieves.
I had to be sure about you though,
but you were...

WOMAN
As good as gold.

FADE OUT

Best Friends

Genre: Murder Drama

Casting: - 1 + Dead Body Actor - Female/Female - Male/Male
(with change of '...I was pregnant line...').

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Your dead body actor needs to be holding a knife as if they have stabbed themselves with fingers around handle and a spill of blood.

Make sure the leading actor is wearing surgical gloves having premeditated the murder to avoid fingerprints.

If leading actor is left of screen looking right your dead body needs to be right of screen looking left obeying the 180 degree rule avoiding crossing the line. Unless that is, you are able to move the camera with a steadycam cutting back to a Master shot to show relative geographical positions.

Possible Additions: a/ you could film the murder prior to dialogue - possibly edited into slow motion with echoing screams and drowned thudding conversation. b/ the leading actor could be seen leaving the apartment and dispensing of the gloves.

FADE IN

INT.FLAT LIVING ROOM/BEDSIT - NIGHT

We see a FEMALE wearing surgical gloves finishing typing at a laptop

FEMALE

You had no idea and the next
morning I could see he was confused
and didn't know what to do about
the situation

She presses print and goes to the printer
I told him not to worry about it -
that if he wanted to tell you he
could, but if he didn't want you to
know then I would keep it between
us.

Taking paper from printer
I was not so concerned about the
consequences of you finding out to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE (cont'd)
be honest, I'd get what I was given
- bitchslap, hairpulling, whatever
- I'd have taken it. What I was
more concerned about was that where
most people would just feel intense
guilt I felt... almost hopeful that
what happened that night was
because he had feelings for me and
he'd decide to tell you... But he
didn't - So I had to tell you - I
was pregnant -

The camera pans to a WOMAN with a bread knife sticking in
her - dead - The FEMALE places the paper from the printer in
a prominent position. It reads

LETTER

YOU'VE BROKEN MY HEART TOM - SLEEPING WITH MY BEST FRIEND

FEMALE
and now he'll only have me to have
feelings for... best friend.

FADE OUT

Confession

Genre: Comedy

Casting: - 2 - Male/Female - Female/Female - Male/Male

Filming & Acting Challenge

The comedy comes from playing the text for real.

a/ it is what is not said between the lines that needs to be brought out in the delivery by actors and director.

b/ the quote is from Shakespeare's Hamlet 'To Be Or Not To Be' speech.

c/ the end needs to be created for comic effect. Here the directors imagination will be shown at its most inventive.

FADE IN

INT.HOUSE - NIGHT

A young married couple A & B. B is beside bed or chair.
A is in bed or chair dying...

A
Did you ask ?

B
Yes

A
How long have you known ?

B
I wondered if you knew and were
keeping it to yourself - when
they gave you 6 months...

A
I'm ready for you to tell me now.
How long ?

B
6 months ago...

A
Days...

B
Yes

Long pause

(CONTINUED)

A
I don't believe like you

(cont'd)

"...the undiscovered country from
whose borne no traveler
returns..." - you will

A
I've got a confession

B
You don't believe

A
Just in case...

Pause

I haven't always been faithful

B
I know

A
You do?

B
Of course - why else would I
have been poisoning you ?

Furious A starts to have heart failure

A
I'll haunt you!

B gets up to go.

B
(smiling)
I don't really believe

A dies.

Pause. B looks on then walks to the door. It locks.
Curtains blow. Lights flicker. Items fly about the room.

A VOICE OVER
(cackling laughter)
You'd better believe now !

FADE OUT

DICE MAN

Genre: Murder

Casting: 3 - Male/Male - Female girl as dead body

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Luke Rhinehart wrote an excellent book 'Dice Man'. This piece steals the roll of the dice concept from it. Plus it is also loosely based on a true news story of a youth who murdered his girlfriend for a breakfast. So extraordinary as it may seem, there is a strong thread of truth in this screenplay to make it a successful short film.

The friendship relationship between the two boys will be crucial to making this short film believable. The one, Tom of course, turning out to be a psychopath who frames his best friend.

The audience really need to be made to feel for Henry, having been framed at the end.

All of the premeditated actions Tom frames Henry with will need clever direction so the audience is able to believe that his framing is psychopathically full proof.

The wood scene location will be an important character in the story - careful reconnaissance to find a suitable woodland opening where filming without disturbance can take place will be a challenge.

Additional Possibility: a montage at the start of the film, of the boys regularly meeting with their friends in a cafe for early breakfast before 6th form.

FADE IN

INT.TOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

TOM and HENRY two 16 yr olds are talking

TOM

She's pregnant. The problem is I don't know how to tell my Mum or her parents or anything. It's hard to, because my Mum will be pissed and will kill me and if we tell her parents they will kill me too, so either way I'm dead. So I need a way to tell them both but in a way they won't kill me. Any good advice?

(CONTINUED)

HENRY

Take out a life insurance policy for yourself Tom. Let them kill you. The payout will pay for her and the baby.

TOM

Funny. I'm too young to be a Dad!

Pause.

I've a better idea. I'll kill her and baby.

HENRY

Oh - yeah - that's the other side of the coin I suppose - How?

TOM

(Sudden excited idea)

Not a coin. A dice! The 'How' will be decided by a dice.

He goes to a draw and takes out a dice, grabs a pen and paper. Sits at his desk. Passes the pen and paper to HENRY.
Six numbers. Six ways to do it.
The throw of the dice decides. Your writings easier to read than mine Title it 'The Dice Man'

HENRY

(Amused -Playing along with the fantasy)

Ok - Number One - Poison

HENRY writes.

TOM

Two - Push off a cliff.

HENRY

Three - Bludgeon with something heavy.

TOM

Four - Strangle.

HENRY

Five - Stab.

TOM

Six - Drown.

TOM prepares to throw the dice.
Here goes...

TOM throws. It comes up with option three.

HENRY

Three -

HENRY looks at list.
Bludgeon with something heavy.

Pause

TOM

Henry - what would you do if I
actually did kill her and the
baby?

HENRY screws the list into a ball and starts to go.

HENRY

Oh - I would buy you breakfast at
our favorite greasy spoon. See
yer...

He throws the list at TOM while letting himself out.

TOM picks up the dice. As he does so a spider crosses the
table. He sinisterly bludgeons it several times with a
final squash and twist.

EXT.WOOD -DAY

We see TOM burying a pair of blooded gloves. Then we see a
hooded girls body lying curled up on the ground. A rock
the size of a rugby ball covered in blood beside her head.
Her

hand bag is nearby with her mobile phone next to it. We
then see TOM standing TEXTING the following

TEXT

Where are you? Love Tom xxx.

The mobile beside the bag signals receipt of a text. We
see

TEXT

Where are you? Love Tom xxx.

HENRY appears.

TOM

What took you so long? You
replied
to Jane's text asking you to come
and meet her here, alone, an hour
ago.

HENRY freezes taking in the scene - then...
Don't say anything, but you may
just owe me breakfast.

(CONTINUED)

Pause.

HENRY

(Relieved)

Oh - I see - very funny - the pair of you. You can get up now Jane.

You almost got me you...

TOM

(Laughing)

OK - Games up Jane. Henry look how real that blood on that rock is. Pick it up - lick it - I made it with syrup and red cake die.

HENRY does so laughing. Licks it. Sudden realization - its real blood - throws rock down.

TOM

(Coldly)

Pull back the hood.

HENRY does so. He freezes in disbelief and fear as he stares back at TOM.

She was facing away from you and you thought this is it. You tried to break her neck. She was screaming so you picked up that rock and started to hit her - bludgeon - her with it. The worst part was feeling and seeing her skull give way.

HENRY

You sadistic bastard.

TOM

Murderer! You wrote a list of how you might do it 'Dice Man'. You always fancied her. You thought you were in with a chance when she wanted to meet you here alone. Finding out she was pregnant by me you ...I followed you here and now I'm going to tell them what I found. Everything's got your fingerprints on - the list - the rock - the hood.

TOM hurries away repeating chanting inanely back.

Everything's got your fingerprints on - the list - the rock - the hood! Everything's got your fingerprints on - the list - the rock - the hood!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

5.

Chanting echoing fading away.

Wooded stillness. Henry stands frozen tears streaming down his face.

FADE OUT

DOCTOR REECE

Genre: Murder

Casting: 2 - Elderly Person Female/Male (non Speaking).
Male/Female (Possible for Actor Showreel content)

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Although this is loosely based on a real case (that of serial male killer Dr Shipman) I see no reason why a female doctor could not also be cast.

The Atmosphere of the end of a tiring all night A&E Hospital shift needs to be created. Hearing an ambulance siren followed by an outside shot of a Hospital could help.

It is made realistic by the fact the character begins to talk to a photo of their dead mother that has fallen from their pocket. The actor note here is to be aware of prying ears thus keeping the vocal delivery clear but quiet. Make sure the boom gets near to your actor to allow this.

A POV shot of the picture inserted several times will help the audience accept the character speaking their thoughts out loud. Make sure you do not cross the line with it. Remember screen right/screen left even with a POV of a picture.

The camera needs to let us see early on that the character is a Junior Doctor by letting us see their identity lanyard.

Likewise the camera needs to let us see a vile that says PETHIDINE clearly on it.

Macro settings on the camera will be useful for the injection shot. The trick here for the prop is to use a syringe with a sewing machine needle in it.

For the home visit film the outside of a house. Have your actor respectably dressed as a family GP would be.

Research 'The Will' document needed to make it believable.

Add suitable dramatic music to suit the piece.

FADE IN

INT. HOSPITAL DOCTORS CLOAK ROOM - EARLY MORNING

A male JUNIOR DOCTOR REECE stumbles through the door in green uniform and stethoscope around his neck and name tag. He closes the door with the back of his foot with some

urgency and leans his back against it. Tired and exhausted after a long night shift he checks to see he his alone. He moves with some speed to take off his hospital attire. He

fumbles to take out a pethidine vile from his jacket. He pulls out his watch with the vile. He looks at the time it reads 6.42am - he puts the watch back holding the pethidine

vile while feeling for a syringe possibly in another pocket. He notices what we saw falling from his pocket a frayed slightly crumpled photo that has fallen to the floor. He

picks the photo up, while distractedly continuing to feel to find the syringe...

JUNIOR DOCTOR REECE
(pensively)

Looking at the photo

Hello mummy. Your 'forgiving eyes',
always forgiving -

He finds the syringe. Looking between it and the photo. -
your naughty son.

He goes to put the photo away. Stops and takes a second longer look and then...

Nightmare, walking you to the
toilet, catheter
detached, diamorphine pumping
through your veins. Exhaling in
pain, urinating blood. Horrible,
horrible, horrible shock - knowing
it had reached your kidney's.
Bloody cancer!

Back to bed. Doctor increases the
dose. No more 'forgiving eyes'.
Eyeballs into the roof of your
eyelids, wide open never to shut
until, until... just the whites,
your white eyeballs stuttering in
their sockets... until, you left me
mummy - at 17. I miss you

He puts the picture away. During the next he assembles the syringe draws the dose from the Pethidine vile and injects himself...

(CONTINUED)

You made me feel special - are you proud of me? I'm now, that Doctor Painless, controlling the pain that you were eased from, as I watched until, until - UNTIL.

I now give life or DEATH...

As the dose high hits we see

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

REECE now a General Practitioner. We see him administering an injection of diamorphine to an elderly patient in a chair. He sits and calmly enjoys viewing the process of the patient dying, while he drinks a cup of tea and alters the patients will

REECE

To doctor Reece I leave... He smiles.

FADE OUT

THE EXPERIMENT

Genre: Absurdist Comedy

Casting: - 2 - Female /Male

Filming & Acting Challenge:

This piece is all about fun props, a variety of interesting shots and not least some clever editing for synchronization of Male to Female/Female to Male voices.

Importantly this can only work if you can clearly see the mouths of each character speaking with the others voice.

Direct your actors to have plenty of 'reaction' before speaking i.e., astonishment, frustration excitement, madness etc...,

Plenty of Foley sound could proceed this followed by smoke then the characters and the mise en scene becoming visible.

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM.DAY

A scientific looking contraption is on the table with wires dangling that at sometime were attached to the... FEMALE whose lines are to be dubbed in a male voice and the MALE whose lines are to be dubbed in a female voice both seated at the table.

FEMALE

How did this happen?

MALE

I don't know

FEMALE

I do

MALE

How?

FEMALE

You built that contraption and attached it to the table and then to us...

MALE

Yes and now I have proved that I can drive a car through the eye of a needle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

2.

FEMALE
Are you mad?

MALE
You tell me!

FEMALE
No!!

FADE OUT.

FINGERPRINTS

Genre: Detective Murder

Casting: 2 - Male/Male - Female/Female - Male/Female

Filming & Acting Challenge:

The Son/Daughter answering the Detective's questions, has the difficult job of describing the murder scene for the audience whilst bringing to the fore their backstory of the relationship with their father.

The detective controls the conversation leading to the revelation of who the murderer was.

Filming this will benefit from an authentic vicarage study location.

The audience need to be drawn in by the camera's prying inquisition from the Detective's point of view.

Plenty of reaction shots of the Detective will break the length of the Son/Daughter's dialogue.

Then of course, a POV of the Phone at the crucial point.

FADE IN

INT.STUDY - DAY

We see a DETECTIVE questioning JAMES STADDON the son of the murder victim.

DETECTIVE

I know this must be very difficult for you James. Having found your father only a few days ago in this very room - murdered.

JAMES

Its your job Detective. I've seen enough TV programmes to know that immediate family are the first suspects. So ask what you need.

DETECTIVE

Well I need you to once again describe to me how you found your father.

Pause

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

I knocked on the door. Dad always insisted on that ever since I could walk. I learnt my lesson when I was 5. It was also the start of my being educated in his colorful vocabulary - something I'm sure many of his adoring congregation would be shocked at if they knew how frequently his abusive language permeated these walls. St. Michael Staddon he certainly was not - but I- loved him as Dad being Dad. Not Bishop Staddon orator of famed philosophical sermons that he penned in this very study.

Pause

I'm not sure he even believed in God. You see his beloved wife had died in child birth - my birth - my mother. It would have been a bad career move to throw God out with my bathwater - so 5 years later we were moved into this house with him having risen in the ranks inheriting this bishopric.

DETECTIVE

James - you're still outside the door.

JAMES

Yes - sorry. Perhaps I don't want to go in.

Pause

You see - there not being an answer after my third knock - I did indeed risk the wrath of God by opening the door aware that waking him up if he had nodded off could ignite an incendiary volley of abuse that could bring back my childhood memories of inconsolable wailing at the hurt of it all.

However I needed to ask him a most pressing question - but I digress.

There he was. The french window behind him open. Curtain billowing in the breeze. Dad inert thrust

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JAMES (cont'd)
forward across his desk dribbling
blood.

I at first wanted to run. But
thought as it looked as if he had
had a heart attack that perhaps I
could give him the kiss of life. So
I rushed forward - but then - but
then stopped shocked - because
there between his shoulder blades
sticking out from his back was -
was the knife that your Forensic's
took away as the murder weapon.

Pause

DETECTIVE
Then - what did you do next James?

JAMES
Well of course what else could I
do. I dialled 999 instantly.

The murderer might be waiting to
get *me*. I was frozen to the spot.
The phone on Dad's desk was
immediately to hand - so I phoned
scared out of my wits.

DETECTIVE
This phone here?

He walks to the phone and points at it.

JAMES
Yes.

Pause

DETECTIVE
There were no fingerprints on the
murder weapon.

JAMES
The muderer is not going to be that
stupid is he? He'd wear gloves.

DETECTIVE
Yes. You would wouldn't you James?

JAMES

Yes.

Pause

DETECTIVE

Your Dad's fingerprints were on the receiver.

JAMES

Of course - he was the only person who used that phone.

DETECTIVE

Except of course you - when you dialled 999.

JAMES

Yes.

Pause

DETECTIVE

You didn't take the gloves off.

JAMES

What?

Pause

DETECTIVE

You didn't take the gloves off.

Pause

Your fingerprints are not on the phone.

James looks dumbfounded.

FADE OUT

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

Genre: Murder Detective Drama

Casting: - 3 - 1 Male - 2 Female

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Initially, the audience need to be led to believe the wife/nurse is about to commit suicide.

The suicide note needs to be seen, and printed with the misspelt homophone word 'piece'.

The wife/nurse is a part where the actress is only speaking in the last scene. Great skill is needed in portraying her vulnerability but steely calm in living with her solution to escape her abusive relationship.

When she is ironing she is in control because the ironing board is between her and her husband. In her hand is a deadly weapon, the iron, just in case he attempts to get at her.

The husband is already very drunk when he comes home. His slow burn of insults with gulping down the Lambrini should make it believable that he would pass out in such a short time, especially if in directing his passing out a shot from his POV of the room spinning and his wife going out of focus is included.

A grave in a churchyard should be easily findable that is about 3 months old that has not yet had a headstone put in place. A polite request for permission with the church emphasizing the particular grave will not be identifiable should be gained.

The final scene needs to be directed in such a way as to lead the viewer to believe that the wife is going to be arrested for her husband's murder.

The reveal of the wrong homophone word 'piece' as just that, that is going to be the evidence that is, going to catch her, needs to be seen by the viewer who some will spot prior to the Detective pointing it out to the wife.

There needs to be a moment in the direction at the end when the viewer believes the Detective is going to do her duty - then the twist.

Parallel Editing: To build tension a scene of KIERAN leaving a pub and walking home could be inter cut with JANE's preparations after the audience have discovered it is not JANE who is committing suicide. Will she hide the evidence before he arrives?

FADE IN

INT.BEDSIT - NIGHT

We see a young wife JANE HENSHAW wearing surgical gloves mixing anti-freeze into a bottle of Lambrini. She places the anti-freeze bottle in a cupboard.

On a computer she types

"I do not wish to be revived.
I want to die as I have planned
in piece."

She presses print. The suicide note emerges from the printer. She takes it and hides it along with the surgical gloves that she takes off once the note is in place.

Looking at her watch we see it reads 10.15pm. She puts up an ironing board, turns some music on and starts to iron her nurses coat.

A key is heard in the door. It opens with KIERAN her husband struggling in from work drunk having come from the pub. He throws his coat off.

He goes and turns the music off.

Silence.

He struggles to sit at the table.

Then stares as JANE continues to iron while he grabs the bottle of Lambrini unscrews it and drinks. Then...

KIERAN

(coolly sneering at her)
You miserable whore. Is there no
one you won't look at other than
me. As soon as my back is turned.

He grabs at the bottle of Lambrini unscrews it and drinks.
It's you who have driven me to
drink. Night nurse...

I love you, but you repay me with
deceit. I swear you dare
humiliate me anymore and I'll
kill you

Holding the bottle towards her threatening to use it
against her. Then drinking from it some more in great
gulps.

Kill you - do you hear?

(CONTINUED)

He has finished the bottle. He weakly throws it in her direction as he slumps to the floor passing out.

Jane stops ironing. Goes to where she put the surgical gloves. Puts them on. Takes the note and squeezes KIERAN'S fingers around it and places it on the table. Takes the

anti-freeze bottle out of the cupboard squeezes his fingers around it and places it on the table. She takes the surgical gloves off and places them in her ironed nurses coat pocket that she puts on and leaves for her night duty.

EXT.CHURCHYARD - EARLY MORNING

We see JANE HENSHAW in nurses coat after her night shift, laying some flowers with a card among the residue of dead flowers on KIERAN'S grave about 3 months after his funeral.

The earth on the grave is still a mound without a headstone. The card is hand written by Jane and reads
"We shouldn't have ended like
this. Rest in Piece."

We see a WOMAN looking on from a distance.

INT.BEDSIT - EARLY MORNING

A key in the door and JANE enters. She kicks off her shoes. Takes off her coat and hangs it up. There is a KNOCK at the door.

JANE

Who is it?

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

Detective Alice Grimshaw. May I
come in?

JANE opens the door. We see it is the WOMAN who was looking on in the graveyard holding out her identity card.

JANE

Yes. Hello. Come in. How can I
help you?

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

Your husband's suicide.

Pause.

Your husband had a record before
you married him.

JANE

Oh?

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

For domestic abuse. Was he ever abusive to you?

JANE

No. No. I loved him dearly He never ever behaved badly to me.

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

why do you think he committed suicide?

JANE

I didn't realise it. We both liked a drink. I think he was an alcoholic. That's what the doctor said.

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

Yes. An alcoholic who added anti-freeze to his drink.

JANE

It poisons a lot of cats.

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

You know that?

JANE

Yes. I read it somewhere.

DETECTIVE GRIMSHAW takes from her pocket KIERAN's suicide note that is inside a see through plastic wallet...

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

Is this the suicide note he printed?

JANE

Yes.

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

It reads "I want to die as I have planned in piece."

DETECTIVE GRIMSHAW takes from her other pocket the card that

JANE left with the flowers.

This is the card you left at Kieran's graveside this morning. You've written "We shouldn't have ended like this. Rest in Piece."

JANE

Yes.

DETECTIVE ALICE GRIMSHAW

Handing JANE the card

I suggest you don't leave anymore
cards and destroy this.

DETECTIVE GRIMSHAW takes out a small writing pad and
writes

"Give PEACE A Chance"

She underlines peace and writes it in uppercase.

She takes it from the pad and hands it to JANE saying out
loud

Give 'peace' a chance.

She turns and exits closing the door behind her.

JANE looks at the Detectives note. Looks at her card.

JANE

(slowly seeing her spelling
error)

P-E-A-C-E. PIECE.

Oh - Oh - NO!

(to herself
thanking detective breaking
down)

Thank you, Thank you Thank you,
Thank you

FADE OUT

IMAGINE

Genre: Science Fiction

CASTING: 2 - Male/Female - Male/Male - Female/Female

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Special moving image Morphing Effects for the face from human to Alien Gray.

For this publication copyright of the lyrics of each song has been bought.

Copyright of the songs will have to be arranged and bought. If too expensive change for some for copyright material or write your own with suitable lyrics matching the storyline of the well known song lyrics being replaced.

Directing this requires building the mystery of the encounter.

Lighting and sound effects will also play a major part in creating the atmosphere.

Additional possibility:

An effect of the space craft disappearing into the distance.

FADE IN

INT. BEDROOM -DAWN

We see an unmade bed. Silence. Then HEAR then see an EARLY MORNING ALARM bedside. Then following in time to the bleep of the alarm flashing pulsating red, green and white light

starts, coming through the window. Then RADIATION INTERFERENCE on the alarm. The lights fade away. Through the window we see...

EX.GARDEN -DAWN

GEORGIA standing in the middle of her garden looking up at the sky. She is disorientated as if she has just been dropped from the sky waving something up there goodbye.

Her short sleeved night dress is very obviously on back to front. She has three red diagonal laser cut lines on both of her arms. Laser cuts in a series on her naked ankles and wrists.

Her feet are bare. She slowly turns to look towards her bedroom window wondering how she got to be where she is.

INT. BEDROOM -DAWN

GEORGIA rushes into her bedroom and immediately picks up a hand mirror and starts to examine marks on her body. She turns the alarm off that is now only making a
RADIATION INTERFERENCE NOISE .

As she does so the RADIO turns itself on playing 'The Windmills of Your Mind' sung by Noel Harrison.

RADIO

Round like a circle in a spiral,
like a wheel within a wheel
Never ending or beginning on an
ever spinning reel

She puts the mirror down to search for her watch.

Like a snowball down a mountain, or
a carnival balloon
Like a carousel that's turning
running rings around the moon

Finding it she looks at the clock face. We see the hands moving randomly speedily around.

Like a clock whose hands are
sweeping past the minutes of its
face

Panicking she is in turmoil as in the following words of the song.

And the world is like an apple
whirling silently in space
Like the circles that you find in
the windmills of your mind!

The RADIO stops suddenly at the end of the song. Silence. She picks the mirror up again to examine her face. She sees and we see her reflection in the mirror as the face of an ALIEN GRAY.

At this the RADIO immediately turns on playing Michael Jackson singing 'Man In The mirror'

RADIO

I'm Starting With The Man In
The Mirror
I'm Asking Him To Change
His Ways

(CONTINUED)

Frightened by what she sees. GEORGIA throws the mirror down. At the same time JO (Georgia's live in partner) bursts in. She turns as she watches him grab a holdall and angrily during the next part of the song starts thrusting his

belongings into it. GEORGIA is frozen with fear of what she has just seen of herself

And No Message Could Have
 Been Any Clearer
 If You Wanna Make The World
 A Better Place
 (If You Wanna Make The
 World A Better Place)
 Take A Look At Yourself, And
 Then Make A Change
 (Take A Look At Yourself, And
 Then Make A Change)
 (Na Na Na, Na Na Na, Na Na,
 Na Nah)

At this point in the song JO angrily switches the RADIO off.

JO

Where have you been? Friday night
 and last night. I've had enough.
 Who is he?

GEORGIA

Look at me Jo. what do you see?

JO

What do I see? What do I see? A two
 timing bitch, that's what I see.

GEORGIA

What day is it?

JO

Time flies when you're enjoying
 yourself does it? Sunday! Bloody
 Sunday. Two nights!

GEORGIA

It can't be. It must be Saturday.
 Help me Jo.

JO

The only thing that can help you is
 your conscience.

GEORGIA

(Screaming. Crying)
 Look at me! Jo they took me.
 Look...

She picks up the mirror. Looks into it. We see the ALIEN GRAY looking back at her. JO sees her face in the mirror - no change. She turns to look at him.

Her face is now the ALIEN GRAY full onto him. JO passes out. An OVAL BALL OF LIGHT appears above JO. The room fills up with a FOGGY HAZE.

GEORGIA turns slowly back to look at herself in the mirror. Her face in the mirror is now her face as she speaks to it in the mirror.

GEORGIA
 (In the mirror face as
 herself)
 We will breed to heel your planets
 pain.

She lays the mirror down. The FOG clears and the oval ball of light vanishes from over JO. As she bends down to attend to JO. The RADIO turns on playing John Lennon singing 'imagine'.

RADIO
 Imagine there's no countries
 It isn't hard to do
 Nothing to kill or die for
 And no religion too
 Imagine all the people
 Living life in peace...
 You may say I'm a dreamer
 But I'm not the only one
 I hope someday you'll join us
 And the world will be as one

During the above GEORGIA gets JO into the bed where she joins him. she leans over to kiss him on the last line 'And the world will live as one' ...

GEORGIA
 (mouthing)
 And the world will live as one

The song stops leaving the RADIO with RADIATION INTERFERENCE NOISE

FADE OUT

OH -DEAR -ITIS

Genre: Absurdist Comic

Casting: 2 - Male/Male - Female/Female - Female/Male

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Comedy is the hardest art form to achieve. It is easy to make an audience cry - but to cry with laughter, well, there is the true skill. This always causes me to rail at the world of film who too rarely seem to recognize comic film actors with Oscars.

This script requires good likable comedy actors with that old requisite chemistry between them. It will be their ability to play the script for real with eccentric characterizations that may lead to winning that rare comic recognition.

Directing comedy is an equal challenge. The camera has to be where the audience need to see the reactions. An ability to edit the piece with the correct pace will make or break the performances.

Comedy requires plenty of High Key Lighting.

N.B

Having traveled performing in comedies. It was noticeable at different theaters each week, that where the lighting set-up was dimmer than usual, the laughs were less.

FADE IN

INT.DOCTORS SURGERY - DAY

DOCTOR sits by his desk and computer. Knock at the door.

DOCTOR

Come in.

PATIENT enters

PATIENT

Hello doctor.I've come for a
general medical check up for a life
insurance.

Sits down.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR

Yes - right. You seem a little out of breath.

PATIENT

No - I feel fine.

DOCTOR

You look a bit pale.

PATIENT

Never felt better.

DOCTOR

Are you sure?

PATIENT

yes.

DOCTOR

That could be a sign of 'over-confident-itis'.

PATIENT

'Over-confident-itis'?

DOCTOR

Yes - you think all is well, but oh dear.

PATIENT

Oh dear?

DOCTOR

Yes - 'oh-dear-itis'.

PATIENT

'Oh-dear-itis'?

DOCTOR

How do you feel now?

PATIENT

Well..

DOCTOR

You see 'over-confident-itis'.

PATIENT

No - I meant - well - I'm not sure how I feel now.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR
Ah that's better. How do you sleep?

PATIENT
With my eyes shut.

DOCTOR
Ha Ha Ha very funny!

PATIENT
No - I do - with them shut.

DOCTOR
I see. So you also suffer from
'no-sense-of humour-itis'.

PATIENT
Am I dying?

DOCTOR
Yes most probably - for a laugh!

PATIENT
When I came in here I felt fine,
now I'm depressed.

DOCTOR
You should cut down on drinks.

PATIENT
I don't touch a drop.

DOCTOR
You should cut down on smoking.

PATIENT
I don't smoke.

DOCTOR
You should stop taking drugs.

PATIENT
I don't do drugs.

DOCTOR
You should cut down on sex.

PATIENT
Haven't had sex in ages.

DOCTOR
In that case. Here's your
prescription. Get yourself a drink,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR (cont'd)
learn to smoke, do some drugs, and
find a partner for plenty of sex.

DOCTOR
Have you a next of kin?

PATIENT
No.

DOCTOR
Then to conclude. Make me a
beneficiary of your will and you
will have passed this medical for
your life insurance with flying
colors. Congratulations. Feeling
better?

FADE OUT

PLAGIARISM

Genre: Drama

Casting: 2 - Male/Male - Female/Male - Female/Female

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Realistic university professor's office location with a key locking door.

The STUDENT is super cool not showing any fear when threatened.

The PROFESSOR when unmasked needs to become sinister enough for the audience to believe that the STUDENT is in real danger as he/she locks the door withdrawing the key.

Props: realistic looking cheque book and well bound dissertation.

FADE IN

INT. PROFESSOR STEPHEN HENSON'S UNIVERSITY ROOM - DAY

We see PROFESSOR STEPHEN HENSON and a STUDENT either side of a desk with the professor's name and title displayed. The student sits with his back to the door.

PROFESSOR

It gives me no pleasure to
instigate this disciplinary
for this act of plagiarism

Flicking through dissertation reading
Utilize the ionosphere - Free
Energy - Perpetual Motion -
Particle Beam "Death Ray"!

My very words published for my
doctoral degree 20 years ago. How
could you be so stupid as to
blatantly reproduce parts of your
own professor's work.

STUDENT

Because it's not your work.

Pause

Thomas Edison restricted him
because he proved to be several
levels cleverer as a scientist. His

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT (cont'd)

invention of alternating currents and remote control signals are integrated in almost every device we use. Yet luckily for you few had heard of him; until that is to today, with his genius finally getting acknowledged. Nikola Tesla.

PROFESSOR

Where did you find his paper?

STUDENT

Same place as you.

PROFESSOR

(sarcastically)

I doubt it. The internet was in its infancy then.

My father (who was also a scientist) met Tesla where he lived in "Hotel New Yorker" shortly before he died in 1943 aged 87. The Pentagon seized all his papers which they now claim to have lost.

Holding up dissertation

The contents of this one miraculously escaped into my father's collection.

During the following The PROFESSOR gets up and walks around behind the STUDENT. We see him turn the key in the lock and withdraw it.

Sadly neither you or I could be clever enough to have conceived its concepts.

My father left all his papers to a university library. Since when they must have published them on line for you to find Tesla's paper.

So - aren't you lucky?

He now stands behind the STUDENT who continues to look to where he was sitting behind his desk.

I could break your neck from where I am now.

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT

Painful- for you, if you get caught.

PROFESSOR

Yes - perhaps not the best 'safeguarding' practice for either of us. But you stormed in

Shows STUDENT key.

locked the door and threatened me to let your plagiarized work count.

STUDENT

With no gun? No knife? No fingerprints on the key? Professor you had better keep your day job. Murder me and you'll be caught.

PROFESSOR sits back down behind his desk. Key in hand.

PROFESSOR

Perhaps you are clever enough for a First Class Honors Degree then?

STUDENT

Now that's exactly what I was thinking when I walked through that door. I also thought how cool it would be to graduate without any debt?

PROFESSOR

Clever enough for no debt? Fifty Thousand Pounds?

STUDENT nods approval. Professor takes a cheque book out and writes the amount.

You'll go far.

STUDENT

You have gone far.

The PROFESSOR hands the cheque over with the key. Watching the STUDENT unlock the door to leave.

PROFESSOR

(calling after him)

Today's lesson: "what a tangled web we weave. When first we practice to deceive!".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

4.

FADE OUT

PLASTIC RELATIONSHIP

Genre: Drama

Casting: - 2 - Male (non speaking) - Female (Female showreel piece)

Filming & Acting Challenge:

This is a short but challenging piece to get right. The bar atmosphere needs to be real.

Find a location with a bar. Make sure it is a quiet time. Piped music will need to be turned off. Be aware of noisy fridges and air conditioning.

The actress will need the voice over lines to be read out loud to her off screen while being filmed 'reacting'.

Director make sure you get her to react visibly to what she is thinking.

If tears cannot be produced on the hundredth take at the end use Glycerine!

Lights will need to be concealed as well as camera from the obvious fun you can have getting mirror shots.

Continuity with the mixing of the cocktail and £50 note and change. with accompanying Foley will need choreographing.

The POV of cuts on her wrist with the sleeve of her blouse being pulled down to cover them will need to be worked out skilfully. It will need to edit in with her and the man's reaction shots.

Music can be used subtly to intensify her final breakdown.

FADE IN:

INT. BAR - DAY

A young BARMAID is serving a respectable MAN. As she is getting a shot of Vodka from an optic to make a cocktail her MOBILE RINGS Answering the phone

BARMAID

I can't talk now - I'm at work

She terminates the call and puts the phone down. As she continues to make the cocktail we hear in VOICE OVER

(CONTINUED)

BARMAID (V.O.)

Yeah - work - always at work - what is it you said? 'A woman's work is never done - that's why we get paid less'- and what are you doing at the moment ? Scanning the job pages? No - checking up on me to make sure I'm at work.

Passing cocktail to man

BARMAID

That'll be £7.80 please

BARMAID (V.O.)

Why can't you be like him? - smart - professional...

MAN hands £50 note to her

BARMAID (V.O.)

Wealthy...

As she receives the cash her sleeve pulls up to reveal self harm cuts on her upper wrist

BARMAID (V.O.)

Oh God - did he see ?

BARMAID

(to MAN embarrassed)

Cut myself - not deliberately - getting plastic flowers out of a glass vase I knocked over - glass everywhere...

She checks £50 note to make sure its original then gets change while speaking the following

BARMAID

Though some people do - self harm - not me - how could anyone put themselves through that pain?

Handing the change

BARMAID

What do you do then? I mean when not listening to some ditzy Barwoman excusing her accident prone adventures...no let me guess - you're a psychiatrist specializing in dysfunctional behavior

(CONTINUED)

(she over compensates with embarrassed giggles) The MAN acknowledges her with an expression implying that she may be right. BARMAID looks at her wrist again

BARMAID
(giggles turn into crying)
Plastic flowers - plastic
relationship!

FADE TO BLACK.

PRETTY WOMAN

Genre: Drama

Casting: 2 - Male/Male

Filming & Acting Challenge:

There is nothing pleasant about these characters although they are obviously not stupid by their style of dialogue. The drunken drama of the scene does not excuse their behaviour.

Directing this, the feel of a night club atmosphere has to be prevalent.

The POV of the girls purse with credit cards and money has to be clear for the audience to see with an identity card with a picture of the girl (pretty Woman).

Possible Addition:

Clubber comes into the toilets. They drop the purse and cards in the basin taking the cash and exit. The person who came in, after having a pee, goes to wash his hands , sees what is in the basin, picks up purse and credit cards... as a bouncer comes in and catches him red handed.

FADE IN:

INT. NIGHTCLUB TOILET - NIGHT

MUSIC can be heard from the dance floor in the background. We see Male Characters A & B drunkenly fighting.

A

Stop...Stop...she's not worth it.
Both break off from fight

B

Pretty woman...worth It to me.

Character A Gets some toilet paper for a bloodied nose. Hands a clothes brush to B to dust himself down.

(CONTINUED)

A
We are fighting because we're
reproductively focused

B
(slowly drunkenly understanding
what A meant)
Yeah...right on! And my knob wants
to be the winner

A
Anyway... she wouldn't be
interested in either of us.

B
Oh yeah? Why not?

A
We're not wealthy... and we are not
kind. Two attributes all woman look
for.

B
You and your psycho babble... Who
said we're not wealthy

Character B pulls out a woman's purse from his inside pocket
and starts to look at credit cards and identity card of girl
(Pretty Woman) and count money.

A
Well we're certainly not kind!

They both break into laughter at their ill gotten gain.

FADE OUT.

MEN

Genre: Comedy

Casting: 2 - Female/Female

Filming & Acting Challenge:

This is a piece to practice continuity and comedy acting with.

Get your actors to mark their scripts at what point they are to pour wine and what word they are going to drink on. If that is done then all shots should blend nicely for continuity.

The actors need to be cheekily relaxed and not inhibited.

Film it through as a Master Shot.

Then the fun for continuity can begin with the reverse shots of a Medium Close Up and Close Up.

Make sure you do not cross the line by, seeing that, in the reverses one character is Screen Left Looking Right with the other Right of Screen looking Left.

You may want to try and fit a POV shot into a wine glass so as an audience we can wish we were drinking too!

FADE IN:

INT. WINE BAR. DAY

Girl chat. Female characters A & B sit at a table. Wine bottle between them and drinking from glasses.

A
Why do some men claim to be sexual athletes?

B
Because they always come first!
Both laugh

A
Oh you are funny...Do you ever talk to him when you're...you know
(indicates making love)

(CONTINUED)

B

Only if he telephones! Once again
both roar with tipsy laughter

A

We...we...love em
really...Hey...mine walked 3 miles
the other day in the rain because
the car had broken down in the
middle of nowhere and neither of us
had are phones on us.

B

Yeah... Well that's what they are
designed for

A

Yeah ...and when he came back
dripping wet I said 'what took you
so long'.

B & A

That's what we're designed for!
Both laugh hysterically

FADE OUT.

NIGHT NOISE

Genre: Comic Suspense

Casting: 2 - Male/Female

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Sex sells! The success of this piece will depend greatly on the casting. The Woman and Man need to have chemistry.

The Woman is a highly intelligent femme fatale.

Directing this piece requires subtle lighting and a skill in building fear in the audience before any conversation begins and the burglar is revealed.

POV and reaction shots of the Woman seeing the photo and putting two and two together about the Man need to be worked out taking the viewing audience with her revelation at the same time.

FADE IN

INT.BEDROOM - NIGHT

MAN wakes with a start. Listens frozen. Gets out of bed in pants. Stands by bedroom door quietly opens it. Listens frozen. We hear someone RUSTLING downstairs. Man quickly

quietly grabs trousers off floor puts them on hurriedly. Grabs shirt. Picks up dumb bell. Moves stealthily through door.

INT.DOWNSTAIRS LOUNGE - NIGHT

We see a hooded FIGURE all in black with a holdall filling it with valuables. Suddenly the figure stops. Listens frozen. It's nothing. Relaxes. Carries on rifling room.

Picks up laptop.

MAN

I wouldn't touch that if I was you.

FIGURE freezes. Man turns light on. FIGURE turns slowly around putting laptop down. The FIGURE is that of a WOMAN in a black cat suit with a black balaclava covering her head.

MAN

The games up

The WOMAN seductively takes off the balaclava revealing a mischievous confident feisty pretty face.

(CONTINUED)

The MAN looks pleasantly surprised

WOMAN
(indicating dumb bell.
winsomely)
You won't need that.

MAN
You may be a black belt.

WOMAN
(Flirting)
More Palates.

MAN
(angry)
What the hell are you doing in my
house!

Chuckling dumb bell down.

WOMAN
(Cheekily)
Being caught ?

MAN
(Indicating bag)
That's my stuff!

WOMAN
(Cheekily)
I'm sorry. Is there anything
that's not yours?

MAN
It's my house!

WOMAN
Sorry

MAN
Sorry? Sorry? It's 2 o'clock in
the morning! Who are you?

WOMAN
(Flirting. Facetiously.
Joking)
A spy???

As she says that her eye catches a picture of a wedding photo of a YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE in a picture frame. The MAN freezes as she observes the picture. We see a POV

of the picture and her looking at the MAN comparing
(Nodding sagely...yes...)

A spy...I wondered why the pane
of glass in the back door was

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN (cont'd)
already broken. I Didn't expect
anybody to be in.
(Accusingly)
You don't read newspapers or
letters stuffed through the porch
glass door - do you?

MAN
Oh - I see - you thought I was
away on holiday?

WOMAN
(Flirting confidently)
I don't break panes of glass. I
usually cut...

MAN
Professional.

WOMAN
(Indicating that he is
an...)
Amateur.

She picks up the picture.
Not much of a likeness.

MAN
(Flirting. The games up)
You're better looking

WOMAN
You too...

Pause
when do you think they'll be
back?

MAN
Framed - Late Honeymooners -
another couple of days.

Pause
I could do with a bit of company
?

Long Pause

WOMAN
(Seductively)
Mmmmm. You had me worried. I
thought that was *also* a gun in
your pocket.

Walking towards him
But you're just pleased I'm here.

CONTINUED:

4.

She kisses him
 Sexy squater...

 MAN
 Sexy spy....

Ravishing each other.

FADE OUT

ROOM 13

Genre: Detective

CASTING: 2 - Male/Female - Female/Male (non speaking)

Filming & Acting Challenge:

This is based on a true story that originally happened in a Paris Hotel.

Detective Roberts can be played by either a Female or Male actor. A considerable challenge to keep an audiences attention for such a long speech. Nothing new though, for this genre.

Directing this, an exterior shot of a very expensive hotel would set the scene. (get permission and change its name if they are not happy with it being associated with the storyline).

The Male/Female actor listening to the summing up will be required to be an interesting listener. Direct them to give the camera plenty of usable reactions. Direct them to create business with appropriate props i.e., handkerchief to cry into, glasses, packing a suitcase etc.

There is no reason why this should be a static piece. The actors can be moved around.

Possible Additions:

Visuals of aspects of the summation. i.e., taking number off the door etc.,

FADE IN

INT.HOTEL ROOM - DAY

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR ROBERTS, is summing up a missing person case to the missing persons sister

ROBERTS

You say you never saw your brother in his room? He was booked into room 13 on the first floor last night - you into room 25 on a floor above having both arrived from New York for the Edinburgh Festival. You had a light meal together in the grill room. He

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROBERTS (cont'd)
retired half way through hardly
able to keep his eyes open showing
severe fatigue with a headache from
jet lag. You, shortly after your
desert, to your room.

You awoke at almost noon this
morning, hurriedly got yourself
dressed to attend a 1 oclock show
you had booked to see with your
brother. You phoned reception and
asked to be put through to room 13
to hear after some silence "Madam,
there is no room 13 in this hotel".

Had you mistaken the room your
brother was in? You went down to
speak to the receptionist who
produced the hotel register with no
record of your brother Paul
written in it.

Seeing your distress, and as a
private investigator and fellow
guest, I offered you my services.

I went with you to the first floor
and indeed there were rooms 12 and
14 but - appeared to be no 13.

Now I say appeared to be no 13 - I
know now after further
investigation there was and further
more is a room 13!

But why hide room 13 and why erase
your brother Paul's name from the
register? And where is your
brother?

I now have to tell you that this is
a strange crime - there
is deception enough to give you
and your brother the right to sue.

Your brother was diagnosed with
Typhoid in the night. He was
delirious phoning for help
from reception. The hotel
management worried that such a
contagious illness could cause
panic amongst the guests if they

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROBERTS (cont'd)
found out, so had your brother
taken privately to a private
isolation hospital.

The Manager chose not to inform the
day staff, except for instructing a
new day receptionist who was
starting her first day, that there
was no room 13, because of
superstition.

Room 13 is to be fumigated. The
night hotel maintenance man was
instructed to hide its existence -
information he divulged to me for a
small bribe after I saw this

Taking the number 13 he found taken from the door out of his
pocket.

on his work top, with some scraps
of matching first floor corridor
wallpaper.

The Manager was not told by the new
receptionist that you were looking
for a missing brother who she
thought you thought was in the
fictitious room 13. Until I
confronted the manager he knew
nothing of a sister looking for the
man from room 13 - he is deeply
apologetic and tells me your
brother is having the best
private treatment, that the hotel
will pay for, as long as you agree
to keep his illness unpublicized.

My advice is for you to agree to
this - here is the address of the
hospital

As he takes the address from his wallet we see a cheque for
£5000 from the hotel made payable to PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
ROBERTS.

FADE OUT

SHIT THE BED

Genre: Ethereal Mystery

Casting: 2 - Male/Female - several extras

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Directing skill and patience will be exercised here.

A split screen effect is needed towards the end showing the same character interacting with their dead and alive self. This will be a challenge for continuity including that of lighting.

This is a vibrant club with all extras dancing around. The camera has to take us on the trip that the Young Man is on. The audience need to realize what has happened at the same time he does.

Sound: the club music can be played to get the extras and cast moving to the beat but it needs to be turned off for the dialogue and edited in later. Otherwise editing will be a nightmare - be warned!

Lighting: clever lighting has to make the Girl look Angelic.

FADE IN

INT. RAVE - NIGHT

We see a YOUNG MAN dancing inanely around a beautiful GIRL in a Bright white light. The MUSIC is House, Big Beat, Electro, Ecstasy Driven Music.

YOUNG MAN

Oh Man! Good 'E' Eh? Goody!, Good 'E'! I dig your wings.

Did it hurt when you fell from heaven? You're too beautiful for this place. Fancy coming back to mine?

GIRL

It's your turn to come to mine.

YOUNG MAN

Whoa hay!Of course. Janice. God I loved you. You look so different Jan. Man, I heard you had OD'd a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG MAN (cont'd)
couple of years back. Can it really
be? Wow! How could I have ever let
you get away. I'm yours. Lets get
to your place. O Man!

GIRL
It's your time.

YOUNG MAN
Yeah! My time. Your Time. Anytime
anyplace. Woohoo lets go! Cloud
Nine.

He starts to go but is frozen to a stop by the sight of
himself being carried out from the dance area. Everyone
stands watching. The music stops. Silence. We hear girls

weeping. Quietly MUSIC starts to play again melding a mix of
classical extraordinary heavenly music with the Ecstasy
Driven Music.

Clever trick Man. Hey that looks
like me.

GIRL
It is.

YOUNG MAN
He is Dead. Molly? Oh Man what a
high. Funny. Funny. Funny.

GIRL
Its your time.

YOUNG MAN
You're so beautiful. *He is dead.*

GIRL
You are dead.

YOUNG MAN
You are dead?

GIRL
Yes we are dead.

YOUNG MAN
I am dead? Oh Man. Shit the bed!

FADE OUT

SPEED DATE

Genre: Comedy

Casting: 3 - Male/Female - Off Screen Organizer

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Can you get this date filmed in 3 minutes?

Create the environment of an authentic Speed Dating occasion.

The fun of this piece is the revelation at the end. Depending on your casting what would be the result?

Directing, the camera needs to salivate with the male and female gaze taking your audience with the seduction or not as the case may be!

What do males see first that is fanciable?

What do females see first that is fanciable?

Your camera needs to be there.

FADE IN

INT.SPEED DATING VENUE - NIGHT

JENNIFER starts to sit at a numbered table. She has a sticky label attached to her lapel with her name on it. She holds a score card and pen.

ORGANISER O.S.

Ok. You've all got your score cards. Guys and girls you'll be ready to 'score' once the buzzer sounds. The boys will visit each of your tables for 3 minutes starting - now

A BUZZER sounds and TOM with his name label and score card rushes to sit at JENNIFER's table.

TOM

I woke up laughing this morning.

JENNIFER

Were you looking under the sheets?

(CONTINUED)

TOM
I'm going to like you.

JENNIFER
What isn't there to like?

TOM
You tell me.

JENNIFER
I'm high maintenance.

TOM
Then I'll be your 'Man-tenance'
man.

JENNIFER
I like a man with a sense of
humour.

TOM
Ha Ha ha - I'll 'Man-tain' you with
my humour.

JENNIFER
No- I like a man with a sense of
humour.

TOM
Sarcasm - the lowest form of wit.

JENNIFER
But the highest form of
intelligence.

TOM
Jennifer...

JENNIFER
Yes Tom?

TOM
You are beautiful and intelligent.

JENNIFER
Yes Tom.

TOM
Flirtatious and sexy.

JENNIFER
Yes?

TOM
Enigmatic and gracious.

WOMAN
Tom...

TOM
Yes Jennifer?

JENNIFER
You are handsome and interesting.

TOM
Yes Jennifer.

JENNIFER
Cool and charming.

TOM
Yes?

JENNIFER
Playful and *tempting*.

TOM
Then eat from my tree
'Jenn-Eve-fer'.

JENNIFER
Maybe not that *tempting*. Remember
you woke up laughing and I don't
think it would have been at one of
your puns.

The BUZZER goes off. TOM gets up.

TOM
Cut to the quick! The 3 minute
quick.

He goes light heartedly. We see each of their score cards with their speed dates respective names on with boxes on the right side with FRIEND - SNOG - MARRY - AVOID. We see each tick the one decided on. This will depend on how each actor or director feels the date would have gone after the shoot - chemistry in casting!

FADE OUT

THE DRESS

Genre: Drama

Casting: - 1 - Female (Showreel piece)

Filming & Acting Challenge:

Her friend and her are obviously both selfish with the account of their behaviour to each other.

Continuity needs to be worked out. The actress and director need to work out business that will occur at certain words in the script.

Somehow the actress has got to make us feel some compassion for her situation.

A template of a website needs to be created for the POV of what her friend has written about her.

Directing this piece - there is no need for the GIRL to be stationary. You could have her moving about her room in frustration holding her phone and glancing back at the laptop for the POV's to be inserted.

A variety of shot sizes and angles could be filmed to help add to the frustration of the GIRLS predicament.

FADE IN:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

GIRL speaking on mobile phone holding it in the palm of her hand while looking at laptop/ipad.

GIRL

I'm looking at stuff you've plastered about me all over the internet - No need to make an evil website about me. I didn't even fancy him. You were wearing the dress that I wanted to wear. I bought that dress first and you made me return it because it was your birthday. Well that's a 9yr friendship for you. That's Why I did it - I'm not going to lie - that's why I did it...I wanted that dress so I thought I'd sleep with your boyfriend to get back at you. You should have just let me wear the dress - it'd have been so much

(MORE)

GIRL (cont'd)
easier, then none of this would
have happened. Like why?

She looks at webpage and reads
Stop this evilness - I haven't also
slept with his friend. Why did you
add that? Anyway - I think I've
wasted enough time on you - can you
just stop spreading rumours all
over facebook, twitter and this
evil webpage. I'll have to change
colleges now. Thanks for ruining my
life Bitch!

She terminates the call and slams the Laptop/ipad lid down.

FADE OUT.

THE THREE WISE DETECTIVES

Genre:Drama

Casting: 2 Male - 1 Female

Filming & Acting Challenge: It is all in the reactions, pauses and subtle action. What is not said and what lies behind the dialogue. Why would the Detectives want to let their colleague off a crime? I know why: can you get the audience to think the same?

Prop: waste paper bin must be metal or some other safe receptical to withstand burning. Make sure **Health & Safety** are observed with a **fire extinguisher** near by and be careful of setting off smoke detectors. Get permission so that if there is a detector security can isolate it knowingly for a short period of time.

Possible Additions: Shot of Exterior of Police station, setting the scene.

FADE IN

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL (OFF)
She said she left it for us to
look at on the table.

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL and DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL Enter room. Seeing envelope on table. They both sit close to it and each other at table.

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
(opens envelope and Reads to
self)
Guilty - full confession.

Handing over the hand written confession.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
(Reading)
Yes - guilty. When is she coming
in?

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
Any minute now.

Long pause.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
Did you hear anything?

(CONTINUED)

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
No. You see anything?

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
I don't think I could have done.

Pause.

How do you think she disposed of
the body?

The door opens. DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL walks in and
slowly sits down.

DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL
So, you have my confession.

She puts her hands together as if to be handcuffed.
I brought my tooth brush.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
Yes - but I don't think I saw
anything.

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
Nor I - I don't think I heard
anything.

Passing the confession to DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL.

DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL

Long pause.

Then I haven't spoken about it
with you?

DETECTIVES SEE & HEAR nod in agreement.

DETECTIVE SPEAK NO EVIL
Thank you.

Getting a tin waste paper bin. She takes out a lighter and
burns the confession.

See no evil, hear no evil, speak
no evil. The bastards cremated.

She goes to the door.

Thanks to three wise detectives.

She takes out a toothbrush from her bag.
I won't be needing this.

She exits.

DETECTIVES SEE & HEAR go to the burning bin, pick it up,
look at it.

CONTINUED:

3.

DETECTIVE SEE NO EVIL
So now we know.

DETECTIVE HEAR NO EVIL
No evidence.

FADE OUT

TRUST ME

Genre: Psychological Drama

Casting: 2 - Female/Male

Filming & Acting Challenge:

This is loosely based on a real story.

The two separate locations with the other actors being able to be seen on their Face Time screens is going to be a challenge directorially.

Plenty of POV's to the screens.

Jenny's fear is real and her only protection is Paul. All the time she is fishing for him to reassure her of it.

That she realizes at the end he is not who she has thought he is - will break hers and our, the audiences hearts.

Additional possibility:

The screenplay could start with a montage of them together with Jane being waved off at the station back to university.

FADE IN

INT.PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

PAUL is talking on FACE TIME to JENNY who we see speaking from his ipad that is propped up beside him while he works on his laptop

JENNY ON SCREEN

I'm telling you. Someone came to my room here in the halls of residence because they had found my picture on line advertising me as a hooker!

INT.JENNY'S UNIVERSITY ROOM - NIGHT

JENNY's ipad on her bedside table with PAUL on screen. She is sitting up in bed with pen, writing pad and a couple of books she is studying with.

PAUL ON SCREEN

What did you do?

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

What did I do? I called university security of course! What do you think I did? Open my legs !

INT.PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JENNY ON SCREEN

I'm telling you Paul. I'm being cyber stalked. Someone must have hacked our accounts. Those pictures you took of me in the bath. They've not only been sent to friends including those on my course but worse - my Dad! They must have been sent to you.

INT.JENNY'S UNIVERSITY ROOM - NIGHT

PAUL ON SCREEN

Yes - they were - I thought it was you sending them because you were missing me.

JENNY

I miss you. Help me. Please help me Paul.

PAUL ON SCREEN

Your Dad got them ?

JENNY

Yes my Dad got them -

INT.PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JENNY ON SCREEN

- and worse Paul - he thought it must be you.

PAUL

What!?

JENNY ON SCREEN

I know. He's just trying to protect me. You were his obvious target.

INT.JENNY'S UNIVERSITY ROOM - NIGHT

PAUL ON SCREEN

He and your Mum have never liked me.

INT.PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JENNY ON SCREEN

This isn't about you !

INT.JENNY'S UNIVERSITY ROOM - NIGHT

PAUL ON SCREEN

I know - I know. I'd probably think the same. But you don't do you?

INT.PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JENNY ON SCREEN

Of course not. Paul help me - who could be doing this? I love you -
(Starting to cry)

PAUL

I love you.

We see PAUL on his laptop and cut to its screen and see an image of JENNY with wet hair hands seductively stroking through it designed as an advert. He types underneath 'I'M WET FOR YOU - CALL ME (M) 0161 27892'

He presses 'Send'.

Whilst he has been doing the above he has been saying

PAUL

Come back this weekend. I'll protect you. I'll track down whoever is doing this to you.Trust Me.

JENNY ON SCREEN

Oh Paul - what would I do without you? You make me feel so safe. Just talking to you is so good. Can't wait to be with you.

INT.JENNY'S UNIVERSITY ROOM - NIGHT

JENNY puts books on her side table

JENNY

Lets keep this on while we go to
sleep.

She tucks herself in leaving light on.
Night lover.

Long Pause.

PAUL ON SCREEN

(Coldly)

I wish your Mum and Dad hadn't
persuaded you to abort our baby.

INT.PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

PAUL switches FACE TIME OFF.

INT.JENNY'S UNIVERSITY ROOM - NIGHT

JENNY

What?

Sitting up grabbing ipad seeing screen is blank.

What? Paul ?

(Realisation - it couldn't be
could it ? Screaming out with
the agony of the thought
breaking down)

No !!!!!!!!!!!!! Dad's
right...No!!!!!!!!

She grabs her phone. Dials 101
Police...

FADE OUT

URBAN MYTH

Genre: Urban Myth

Castings: 2 - Female/Male - Male/Male - Female/Female

Filming & Acting Challenge:

This is a more instant happening based on the Urban Myth of a son brought home in a taxi, saying to the driver, he'll just go and get the fare from his Dad and when not returning, the driver goes to the door to be told the son has been dead for years. The cynic amongst us will of course think it was a family scam.

For the sake of this story we take the viewer on the journey of what if....what if the dead character really did continue as in this story.

The challenge in directing this piece is how you take the audience on the journey. The viewer needs to see the bloody violence of the characters suicide but not the character dead. So when the character is at the door the audience think - well ok - perhaps the character did not hurt themselves that badly. They need to be in two minds. Perhaps this is just another unbelievable badly made film!

The Parent in the car gets an intuition of a scream and flash of what has happened that needs to be registered with the audience.

To the Parent and the audiences relief the character is safe and at the door asking to be taken to a friends.

Then on returning to the house the reality of the situation is revealed mysteriously to the Parent and audience.

Additional possibility:

You could have the Parent relating to someone their experience to someone while the body is being taken away - the making of an Urban Myth.

FADE IN

INT.LIVING ROOM - DAY

DAD reading the Sunday newspapers hears an in box mobile text tone. He reaches for his mobile on the coffee table.
Reading text

(CONTINUED)

TEXT

Dad - I need to talk to you - love
you - xxx

DAD

(Shouting)

Come and talk to me then!

INT.BEDROOM-DAY

CAROLYN on her bed holding phone.

CAROLYN

(Shouting)

No. You come here!

INT.LIVING ROOM - DAY

DAD

(Shouting)

No!

He gets up and creeps silently out of the living room door.

INT.BEDROOM-DAY

DAD bursts in the bedroom door.

DAD

(Shouting)

What do you want?!

CAROLYN jumps out of her skin. Dad laughs and sits on the bed.

CAROLYN

Dad this is serious.I need a
holiday.

DAD

You need a holiday? You drop out of
college with two months to go to
complete your course. You've just
had your 18th birthday.You don't
have a job.You have one month to go
to take your GCSE Maths again so
that you can improve your grade.
Are you going to tell me you are
going to be revising on this
holiday?

(CONTINUED)

CAROLYN

Yes. I promise. The girls are booking to go to Crete. It's only £200.

DAD

Only £200? Do you know how much £200 is? No of course you don't. You've never had a job. No, No, No, No, No. It's not going to happen. You're staying here. You'll revise every day. You'll give yourself the best chance to get a worthwhile Maths grade.

CAROLYN

I'm going.

DAD

You're not. I've got your passport.

CAROLYN

(In tears)

You don't understand. I'm deeply depressed. If I stay here I'm going to kill myself. I don't want to be here anymore. I want to die. I want to be dead and with Mum.

DAD

(angry)

Well - you've got free will now you're 18. If that's your choice. Go back to cutting yourself. You cannot go through the rest of your life making threats to get your own way. Enough is enough. Your Choice. I love you.

He exits slamming the door.

EXT. DAD'S HOUSE - DAY

We see DAD come out of the front door distraught. He gets into his car and drives off speedily.

INT.BEDROOM-DAY

CAROLYN is equally distraught in tears - thrashing around in anger. She takes a razor out of its packet, slits her wrist

CAROLYN
(Shattering SCREAM)

INT.CAR -DAY

DAD has pulled over and sits in his car.He HEARS the SCREAM and he gets a FLASH BACK to CAROLYN imagining her as she is. He looks worried.

He takes a passport out of his pocket. We see it is Carolyn's as he flicks through it. He hides it at the back of the glove compartment.

EXT.CAR - DAY

DAD driving off.

EXT.DAD'S HOUSE - DAY

CAROLYN stands at the front door looking normal, made up and dressed to go out hand bag in hand - waiting. DAD drives up.Unwinds the car window looking relieved to see CAROLYN smiling.

CAROLYN
Can you take me to Jane's?

Getting in the car.

INT.CAR -DAY

DAD
Jane's ?

CAROLYN
Yes. You remember Jane. I havn't seen her since our Prom.

EXT.CAR DRIVING- DAY

CAROLYN

She's only a couple of miles away.
We used to be really good friends.

INT.CAR -DAY

CAROLYN

Just want to catch up. I'll only be
a couple of hours. Then if you
could pick me up Daddy - then I'll
do some revision.

EXT.JANE'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

DAD's car pulls up, CAROLYN gets out.

DAD

A couple of hours. See you then.

INT.CAR -DAY

DAD driving happily with radio on

EXT.DAD'S HOUSE - DAY

DAD pulls up in car. Gets out walks to the front door.
Starts to open it. We see he is having to force it open.
Something heavy is in the way. As it reaches about a foot
open we see blood on the floor. He squeezes in...

INT. FRONT DOOR -DAY

We see DAD entering looking to the floor where we see
CAROLYN dead.

FADE OUT

WILL THEY OR WON'T THEY?

Genre: Romantic Comedy

Casting: 2 - Female/Male - Party Guests

Filming & Acting Challenge:

The actors need to have chemistry between them. The audience must believe that they fancy each other.

This piece requires clear spoken delivery and comic timing.

Directing this you will have the challenge of getting your actors to have business to do/reactions when not speaking while the thought of each are being relayed to the audience.

POV's of the other party goers will help.

Explore the embarrassing silences in the conversation. Someone could come by with a tray of canopies on offer etc. to break the gaps.

Possible Addition:

Cut after a lengthy pause at the end to:

Tasteful passionate lovemaking.

Did they or didn't they? Was it in their minds?

Titles...

FADE IN

INT.FLAT - DAY

It's JANET's birthday. A small get together includes KIERAN standing to one side holding some idle chat. The door bell rings. JANET goes and opens the door. Its vivacious attractive GILLY who high heels in.

JANET

Gilly. Hooray.

KIERAN watches GILLY as she gives a present to Janet.

(cont'd)

Ah, Gilly - that's her name. Acted together in bit parts in that brilliant short film 4 yrs ago. she's looking good. Fancied her

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

then. But I was with Karen. Now though...

GILLY turns around catches sight of KIERAN.

KIERAN

Hello. How are you Gilly?

KIERAN CONSCIENCE

She'll like me remembering her name.

GILLY

Oh. Hello. Yeah good - and you?

GILLY CONCIENCE

What's his name? James. No, *that* was the character he played in that terrible short film we were in.

KIERAN

Things are going well.

KIERAN CONSCIENCE

Things couldn't be worse

GILLY

What are you doing now?

GILLY CONCIENCE

Is it Coren ?

KIERAN

Writing - not acting anymore.

KIERAN CONCIENCE

That can be why she hasn't seen me in anything recently.

GILLY CONCIENCE

Probably best. He wasn't that good apart from his looks. Yeah good looking and not gay. Better let him know I have a husband now. Wave the ring around.

GILLY

Are you writing a screen play?

KIERAN

Poetry.

KIERAN CONCIENCE

What a lie. But a chance to hook her with a little 'Crowing' from my favourite Ted Hughes poem...

GILLY CONCIENCE

Didn't expect that.

GILLY

Romantic

KIERAN

Yes - well it can be. I'm more Ted Hughes than Keats. Less ethereal
More earthy

"He loved her and she loved him. His kisses sucked out her whole past and future or tried to. He had no other appetite..."

GILLY

"She bit him. She gnawed. She sucked." I love Ted Hughes!

GILLY CONCIENCE

He tricked me. He's dangerous. Don't flirt.

KIERAN CONCIENCE

Good quote. She knew it "She bit him, she gnawed, she sucked" With me, any day, any night - yes - come on - I'm in!

GILLY

Sylvia Plath and him - so romantic - two great poets marrying - tragic she committed suicide.

KIERAN

Yes - they think now she was bipolar.

GILLY CONCIENCE

I don't remember him being so knowledgeable and sensitive. Is it Kayly? No don't don't want to know. I've got to get away from him. He's really very, very, very...

KIERAN CONCIENCE

She's mirroring me. Copying
my hand movements.

GILLY

My husband doesn't like poetry.

GILLY

There. That's it I've mentioned
him. I'm safe.

KIERAN CONCIENCE

Oh no. Husband. Left hand - there
it is - the ring on the finger.
Must remember to look! Don't show
her you've been wasting your time
trying to chat her up. Wind up and
move on...

KIERAN

How long have you been married?

GILLY

3 yrs. He's on a bicycle road
race at the moment. That's why
he's not here.

GILLY CONCIENCE

He's never here. Always riding the
bloody bicycle. Wish he'd ride me a
bit more often!

GILLY

We're both health freaks. He's down
the gym twice a day. I run every
day. Its so relaxing.

KIERAN CONCIENCE

Bet the sex is good. Stop it!
Wasting your time. Move on.

KIERAN

Don't over do it. You must both be
exhausted.

KIERAN CONCIENCE

I'd love to exhaust you but not in
the gym. She's so gorgeous. Go
on, husbands not here - she may be
up for playing away...

(CONTINUED)

KIERAN

Got to be careful with cycling.
They say it can effect your sperm
count.

GILLY CONCIENCE

I've told him that! I bet Colin's -
no what is his name - I bet
his count is good. Got to get
away. Dangerous.

GILLY

Not ready for kids yet.

GILLY CONCIENCE

I'm desperate to start. Maybe he
has been firing blanks? kieran -
its kieran.

GILLY

Kieran what about you. Have you got
any?

KIERAN CONCIENCE

She remembers my name. She wouldn't
have done that if she didn't fancy
me.

KIERAN

If I had found someone like you
I'd love to have done. But not so
far.

GILLY CONCIENCE

That's it - help.

GILLY

Oh that's sweet of you to say. I'm
married remember?

KIERAN

Sadly yes.

KIERAN CONCIENCE

She's hooked. I'll give her
my killer look. Both of my eyes to
each one of hers.

GILLY CONCIENCE

How can I resist those eyes. He's
being so attentive.

(CONTINUED)

KIERAN

Good to see you again.

GILLY

You too.

KIERAN

Sorry your husband doesn't like poetry.

KIERAN CONCIENCE

Come on Ted " She wanted him complete inside her"

GILLY CONCIENCE

"She wanted him complete inside her".

Awkward lingering longing silence.

FADE OUT

LETS BE AVENUE

Genre: Suspense/Comedy

Casting: 6 - 3 Male - 1 Female - 2 extras

Filming & Acting Challenge: Casting: the Wife needs to have a sassy sexy comic allure. Burglar 2 needs to be a comic turn with his straight man Burglar 1. The Husband has to have a masculine believable cool about him.

Directing: this requires skill in creating atmosphere and suspense of a night time intrusion followed by seduction and comic conclusion. The audience must think they are a kinky couple up to the reveal of them being real Police Officers at the end.

Lighting: will be a real challenge. The suspense is carried out in the dark but of course needs to be subtly lit. The majority of the comic part takes place with lights on - give it plenty of High Key Lighting.

FADE IN

INT.LARGE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlit bedroom. We see MAN in bed wide awake watching a BURGLAR with a torch and gloves on at a dresser draw taking jewelry. MAN in pajamas creeps out of bed and grabs standing BURGLAR

from behind. There is no struggle and no vocal exclamation from either. They are both FROZEN in a silent hold. The next conversation is held in a whisper from each

MAN

You're not resisting.

BURGLAR

No

MAN

Aren't you scared?

BURGLAR

Shouldn't you be?

MAN

Perhaps I am.

(CONTINUED)

BURGLAR
I'd like to go.

MAN
I know how you are feeling. Used to
do what you're doing. Caught like
you now - Karma - what goes around
comes around.

Pause.

I'm not going to hand you in - as
long as we get on as we are now.

BURGLAR
You can let go.

MAN slowly releases his hold. BURGLAR turns to face him.
Thanks

BURGLAR'S mobile phone RINGS.

MAN
I wouldn't have left that on if I
was you.

BURGLAR passes it to the MAN. MAN presses ON. Listens.
He's on his way.

Presses OFF. Hands back phone to BURGLAR.

Pause.

MAN goes to door that is ajar. Starts to open it fully to
gesticulate BURGLAR out.

BURGLAR 2 Bursts in with coat over his pointing arm hiding a
gun. Pratt falls over dressing table stool to the ground.
WIFE in bed wakes up SCREAMING long and loud sitting up in

bed in sexy bra and pants protecting herself. She turns
light switch on by bed. Simultaneously BURGLAR 2 has
recovered himself standing up pointing his arm covered by

his coat pointing frantically at whoever looks scared
enough. All others FREEZE at this.

Pause.

Then...

HUSBAND
(To wife)
Don't worry. I've got this under
control.

Both BURGLARS look at each other questioningly. MAN walks over to BURGLAR 2 and triumphantly takes the coat off BURGLAR 2's arm. BURGLAR 2 is deflated as no gun is in evidence. He shakes his cramp filled arm both hands gloved.
I think it's time you both went.

WIFE

(More relaxed)

No.

All look at her disbelievingly.
We're insured.

She gets out of bed. Takes a bag from the wardrobe. Starts to fill it with...

Designer clothes. Expensive - but
once worn - well ...

You obviously need these valuables
more than us.

She winks at HUSBAND and says.
Go and get them a beer darling.
You could do with a beer couldn't
you?

HUSBAND exits.

BURGLARS watch her bemused and seduced by her sexy attire and now flirtatious manner.

Spect you've got little ones that
need feeding Eh?

They mutter in agreement watching as she goes to her jewelry draw and says.

Oh - you musn't miss these. £50,000
worth at least.

Holding up jewelry then putting in bag.

(Teasingly)

Oh you saw something else shiny
there didn't you?

Perhaps less silvery shiny more
gray.

Taking a set of handcuffs out of half open draw.

50 shades (she giggles). These are
real. Let me show you.

Seducing them more.

You can have them. I've got two
pairs. Here's the other. A pair

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WIFE (cont'd)
 each. Let me put them on you.
 He...

(indicating HUSBAND)

prefers to watch

- and I can't believe I'm saying
 this - but you being here right now
 - you're both such a turn on.

BURGLARS have allowed her to handcuff their hands to each other with one set of handcuffs.

MAN (Husband) appears at door in Policeman uniform with Police Radio.

BURGLAR
 (Panicking)
 No Beer? Yes well. Thank you but.
 We'll be *definitely* going now.

BURGLAR 2
 Too right - not really our scene.
 Being watched. Can you give us the
 key please?

Wife has gone to the wardrobe and taken out her Police uniform and put jacket on.

BURGLAR
 Oh no! You really are into this
 thing. It's not for us though...

Pause.

HUSBAND
 (Enjoying their discomfort)
 Not quite what you're thinking.
 Turn the light out darling.

BURGLARS
 (Together)
 No!!

WIFE turns light out. Through the window BLUE FLASHING police light permeates the bedroom walls.
 Wrong house, wrong road I'm afraid.
 You're in 'Let's Be Avenue'!

BURGLARS run for it.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

We see them being apprehended by two officers. Marched out to car.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

POLICE RADIO

13. Sargent Wallace.

WIFE takes police radio from HUSBAND exchanging it for pair of handcuffs she still holds.

On there way to a cell. We'll get a statement from you tomorrow when you're both next in

WIFE

(Into Police Radio)

13. Thank you Jim - over and out.

HUSBAND with handcuffs to WIFE

HUSBAND

I think I'm going to have to arrest you for being a little too seductively brave and clever!

Handcuffing her.

FADE OUT

MADHATTER

Genre: Absurdist Murder

Casting: 3 - Male/Male - Female

Filming & Acting Challenge:

The party props are an important part of this.

Directing it with imagination there is the opportunity to be really adventurous possibly using slow motion in places and dream like tripping sound effects.

The end needs to be directed with special attention to the screen directions. If not followed it will not work. The two characters and the audience need to be made to jump out of their skins. Perhaps adding a 'death rattle' would help.

FADE IN:

INT.LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Balloons and Party Poppers strewn about. Three mugs of tea and a Teapot on the table plus a half eaten cake. A young Woman JENNY is lying in a womb like hugging position on the floor. Male characters A & B are seated either side of the table.

A

Well... I thought it went very well

B

Yes Jenny certainly enjoyed herself.

A

Why did you stop going out with her?

B

Couldn't keep up with her...I mean look...

A

Yeah...she's quite something. You know when I look at her in that state...I sometimes think she's missing out on a great deal.

(CONTINUED)

B

Oh Yeah...don't I know it! I mean
look at me...who wouldn't want to
have my babies? Pause

A

I thought it went very well.

B

The Mad Hatters Tea party!

Character A & B both laugh inanely. JENNY's body spasms
turning over to reveal a cake knife thrust into her chest
with blood having spread. Character A & B jump out of their
skins. Then give each other a relieved congratulatory high
five.

FADE OUT

THE GODDESS OF DEATH

Genre: Sci-Fi/Comedy – for children

This is a treatment for a large cast of JUNIOR and SENIOR school young performers. Much can be improvised around the integral plot dialogue, that is written here, giving all taking part an opportunity to shine.

Characters: SENIOR GIRLS & BOYS 14 + yr olds

Adults: HEADMASTER - FARMER

JUNIOR GIRLS & BOYS: 9 yr. olds – 13 yr. olds

SMALL GROUP OF TEENS: STUDENT REPORTER (son of the FARMER).
JAMES. SEAN.

GODDESS OF DEATH (needs a young late teen comedy actress)

1 – EXT. SCHOOL. NIGHT

In the dead of night through a majestic scotch pines haunting branches we see a banner reading **Performing Arts Summer School** hanging across the front of a large Georgian building. We pan around to see a group of 15+ aged SENIOR BOYS stealthily arriving below a large second floor window. Together they recite

Oh, they do teach the torches to burn bright!
It seems they hang upon the cheeks of night
As rich jewels in Ethiop's ears,
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.

The window goes up and a liquid hits them in the face. They touch their cheeks –taste it ‘wine!’. Tied sheets are thrown out of the window. They climb up.

2 – INT/EXT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

Over shoulder view into the room of all the 15+ SENIOR GIRLS in their dormitory. Giggling and flirtatious – a bottle of wine and plastic cups in evidence of chilling out.

3 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

The last boy in and one of the girls says ‘ We were expecting Romeos – but it looks like we’ve got Cyrano’s.’ One of the SENIOR BOYS hams it up with ‘My nose proceeds me by 15 minutes’. Laughter all round.

The next lines split between the SENIOR BOYS

ALL SENIOR BOYS: My nose is Gargantuan!

1) You little Pig-snout, you tiny Monkey-Nostrils, you virtually invisible Pekinese-Puss,

2) don't you realize that a nose like mine is both sceptre and orb, a monument to me superiority?

3) A great nose is the banner of a great man, a generous heart, a towering spirit, an expansive soul –

4) such as I unmistakably am, and such as you dare not to dream of being, with your bilious weasel's eyes and no nose to keep them apart!

5) With your face as lacking in all distinction - as lacking, I say, in interest, as lacking in pride, in imagination, in honesty, in lyricism –

ALL SENIOR BOYS: in a word, as lacking in nose as that other offensively bland expanse at the opposite end of your cringing spine - which I now remove from my sight by stringent application of my boot!" they all go to kick their derrières.

SENIOR GIRLS 'OK – OK – thank you – we'll let you know – next – they are hams that cannot be cured'.

SENIOR GIRLS 'Ok boys your turn'. SENIOR BOYS 'but first – where did you get the wine'. SENIOR GIRLS 'OK - that's our truth question'. SENIOR BOYS 'No, No no no!'. SENIOR GIRLS 'Yes, yes, yes, yes – Sophie's dad is a wine merchant.' SOPHIE 'Yea and I help him and myself on Saturdays – nuff said'. SENIOR GIRLS 'Truth or Dare'. SENIOR BOYS 'we've just done our dare - and that wasn't our question. So girls truth or dare?' SENIOR GIRLS 'Oh alright - Truth'. SENIOR BOYS 'O.K. Your Romeo has been magically transformed into an animal, and the only way to restore your love is to mate with them. Here's the question: Which animal would cause you the least psychological damage?'. (Girls devise answers). SENIOR GIRLS 'Boys Truth or Dare'. SENIOR BOYS 'Dare'. The girls huddle together to discuss. SENIOR GIRLS 'OK – here goes – You remember our conversation earlier about crop circles - we dare you to prove your point and go out into the corn fields and make some as you said you could.' SENIOR BOYS huddle together to discuss. SENIOR BOYS 'OK – but only if we can make it a party. That is we all go ...and ... and the next truth or dare from you lot has to be a DARE.'. SENIOR GIRLS 'Deal – lets use some of the torches we've got for the open air production of *A Midsummer Nights Dream* – boys wake and bring the other geeks from your dormitory – we can then perform *A Midnight Summers Dream*'. SENIOR BOYS 'will do – but we must not wake the juniors - we don't want them coming along to spoil the fun'. SENIOR GIRLS 'we'll meet you by the front entrance'.

4 – INT. JUNIORS GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

The Juniors are up – the JUNIOR BOYS visiting the girls – a group are at a Ouija Board. Finishing the letters of CELLAR and another group playing Botticelli.

The Botticelli Group – making a bit of noise ‘ we’ve got to be quieter – we don’t want to wake the SENIORS’.

- 1) The Dark Knight – were you the Joker in a film by that name behaving slightly Batty
- 2) Yes I am Heath Ledger
- 1) My Turn – My turn! -

The Ouija Board Group.

- A) I live in the Cellar
- B) Oh my God
- C) (to the Botticelli group) we’ve got a girl who’s dead and lives here in the cellar
- D) Ask how she died

One of them leaves the board backing off scared – there is a pause of spooked fear

Botticelli Group

- 3) We told you you shouldn’t do that stuff
- 4) (a Joker pretending to empathise with them - telling tale very seriously) When I was younger about seven, I was playing, and I saw the cellar door open – just a crack. Now my Mum and Dad had always warned me – (name) whatever you do don’t go near the cellar door. So of course I had to see what was on the other side if it killed me. So I went to the cellar door, pushed it and walked through, and I saw strange, wonderful things – things I had never seen before – like ...trees, grass, flowers, the sun -

The others chuck pillows at him – making a noise.

One of the GIRLS quietens them down. ‘Shush...I hear something’. Someone else ‘Its the girl from the cellar!’. They are quiet.

5 – INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOOR. NIGHT

SENIOR BOYS creeping past on their way out.

6 – INT. JUNIORS GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

Whisper ‘I’m scared’. There is a tap at the window. All look towards it. The lights go out. We see silhouetted a dark shape coming from behind the curtain – slowly moving into the room. The lights switch back on. It is someone in a scream mask with blood streaming from it –a bundle ensues – and the culprit is unmasked giggling away – their accomplice the joker at the lights. A)‘Told you not to play with that ouiji board stuff’ – B)‘You gave it to us’ – A) & Joker ‘stitch up – stitch –up!’

7 – EXT. PROPS SHED. NIGHT

SENIOR GIRLS getting torches

8 – EXT.WOODSHED.NIGHT

Discussing how to make the circles – SENIOR BOYS getting 2 x 1 wood and string etc

9 – EXT.OUTSIDE SCHOOL. NIGHT

Owls and other nocturnal creatures permeate the night stillness with their familiar haunting sounds. A loud screech – cut to a snarling Close Up of a startled cat frightening the girls and audience alike. SENIOR GIRLS light the torches.

9 – EXT.FRONT OF SCHOOL.NIGHT

SENIOR GIRLS and SENIOR BOYS group together around JOSH & CLAIRE.
‘Come on this way’

11 – INT.JUNIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

JUNIOR GIRLS sending JUNIOR BOYS back to their room. ‘We’re going to sleep now’. JUNIOR BOY A ‘I’ll take my board back tomorrow – just leave it well alone till then. By the way I know how she died – it was about 1908– a family moved in here with a little girl called Martha. She and her brother were playing hiding seek – but she never could be found. Tomorrow if you look in the cellar you’ll find what they used to call a priests hole from when they used to hide Catholic priests in Elizabeth 1 reign. She found it her family never did. Trouble is once in she could never get out’. Gob smacked silence. JUNIOR GIRL ‘How do you know that?’ JUNIOR BOY mysteriously taps his nose and exits leaving the JUNIOR GIRLS awe struck.

10 – EXT. PATHWAY TO FIELD.NIGHT

SENIOR BOYS & GIRLS walking with their victuals of wine and crisps, fags etc towards a corn field. With them they carry the two by two pieces of wood ‘this will be over all the newspapers tomorrow ‘CROP CIRCLES IN BEDFORDSHIRE - VISITORS FROM THE PLANET ZOG – they all laugh excitedly continuing on their way climbing over a fence. SALLY ‘Well I don’t think they are made like the boys are going to make them – I think they are real’ GEORGE ‘Yeah - as real as Harry Potter’ JOSH ‘Just you wait and see Sally – ours will look like all the rest – and so what will that tell you’?.

11 - EXT.CORNFIELD. NIGHT

SENIOR GIRLS ‘ Now boys get to work for your dare – geometric shapes measuring the radius with cuts of string like you said’. They start to create the shapes.

12 – INT. SCHOOL HEADS BEDROOM. NIGHT

HEADMASTER fast asleep.

13 – INT. JUNIOUR BOYS DORMATORY. NIGHT

JUNIOR BOYS Asleep

14 – INT. JUNIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

We pan across from the Ouiji Board still laid out to see the JUNIOR GIRLS asleep

15 & 16 – EXT.CORNFIELD. NIGHT

X CUTTING between following scene and SENIOR BOYS making crop circle.

TITANIA's Lines shared by all the girls as a Chorus while walking around ritualistically

...
 The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
 The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
 And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
 The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
 For lack of tread are undistinguishable:
 The human mortals want their winter here;
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
 That rheumatic diseases do abound:
 And thorough this distemperature we see
 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
 Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
 Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
 The childing autumn, angry winter, change
 Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,
 By their increase, now knows not which is which:
 And this same progeny of evils comes
 From our debate, from our dissension;
 We are their parents and original.

HERMIA

God speed fair Helena! whither away?

HELENA

Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!

HERMIA

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA

O that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA

None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

HERMIA

Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

SENIOR BOY Nerd: Helena's problem is Cyrano's – unrequited love

SENIOR BOYS 'Yeah yeah yeah yeah - Enough no more – tis not so sweet now as it was before – How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank – here will we sit and let the sounds of music creep in our ears – soft stillness and the night become the touches of sweet harmony'. SENIOR GIRLS start to sing a contemporaneous pop song such as *Basshunter Feat DJ Mental Theo's Bazzheadz - Now You're Gone!* etc.

SENIOR BOYS 'we'll just have a bit more to drink girls and then It'll be time for your dare.' One starts to say as he passes the bottle around "Another little drink wouldn't do us any harm Pierces through the sabbatical calm. And that is the place for me!"

The rest of the boys follow quoting more from Edith Sitwell's Facades as they continue to chill with the SENIOR GIRLS still singing and dancing:

So do not take a bath in Jordan,
Gordon,
On the holy Sabbath on the
peaceful day-
Or you'll never go to heaven,
Gordon Macpherson,
And speaking purely as a private person
that is the place - that is the place -
that is the place for me!

A rowdy crescendo with all partying

17- EXT. A FARM HOUSE. NIGHT

Shot of a distant farm house with music coming from it. In through the window a party is coming to its end with the few remaining stragglers – we meet all the characters who will be THE SENIOR REPORTERS the following morning. One needs to mention 'a younger sister or younger brother being out of the way at the Acting School near by'. (Devise party scene)

18 - EXT.CORNFIELD. NIGHT

They have mostly merrily collapsed in the full moon light – joking and fooling about. SENIOR GIRLS 'Time to get the next one done boys – put all you litter in this bag – anything left will lead people to think it's a prank.'

SENIOR BOYS 'but first - your dare'. GIRLS 'OK – what is it to be'. BOYS 'all of you stand in a circle – right we are going to spin this bottle – whichever one of you it points at has 30 seconds to hide in the field. The others can cover our eyes. We then have 30 seconds to find you. If we do ALL of you have to take all your clothes off and hold a pose for 5 seconds. Devised dialogue much protestation GIRLS 'We'll get you for this' – agreement – bottle spins – points at one of them – they start to run after the other girls cover the BOYS eyes.

Suddenly a tremendous force like a tornado accompanied by an unearthly sound blows them all to the ground. We see close up shots of them trying to resist and bright lights flashing onto their faces as they are looking up to the sky frightened and awe struck by what they are seeing. We do not see IT only experiencing IT from their terror of what we imagine the cause to be. Silence – then tears – relief IT has gone. 'CLAIRE & JOSH 'Look – we didn't make those' SALLY 'I told you they were real – we shouldn't have been messing with what we don't understand'. We see elaborate crop circles that could not have been created by them. Then in the middle of one a

bright light ignites then fades leaving a glistening pulsating ORB the size of a football. As one they all walk towards it hypnotised saying nothing – we see the look on their faces in individual close ups – they surround it and all stare . In unison they all laugh as if it has told them an hysterical joke – the ORB starts to levitate - no words are spoken.

19 - EXT.PATHWAY BACK TO SCHOOL. NIGHT

WE see SENIOR BOYS & GIRLS being lead towards the school following as one in silence as if being instructed by the ORB – all are under its spell.

20 - EXT. CORNFIELD. NIGHT

We cut to see in the middle of the crop circle they created - their rubbish blowing across into the other circles not made by them and their wood and string scattered and left with bottles of wine.

21 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

Cut to seeing from inside the room the last SENIOR in. The door shuts automatically. Cut to the ORB placed in the middle of the room controlling them. The outer case shatters to reveal a CRYSTAL SKULL. There is a reaction and one of the SENIOR GIRLS screams snapping them out of their hypnotic state.

22 – INT. SCHOOL HEADS BEDROOM. NIGHT

Cut to the HEADMASTER being woken.

23 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

Cut back to the SENIORS having been snapped out of their hypnotic state. Fear and excitement are shared in their conversation.

24 – INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOOR. NIGHT

Cut to the HEADMASTER walking to find out what is happening.

25 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

The door opens HEADMASTER ‘Now – come on what are you all up to? Its 2 o’clock in the morning – and I definitely think you should all now be trying to get some sleep for the rehearsal **this morning!** (seeing the skull) very impressive – and where did you get that - is it a prop from the Indiana Jones movie Kingdom of the Crystal Skull?’. HEADMASTER walking towards it. The children move back in fear trying to warn him. The HEADMASTER shushes them and seemingly now hypnotised touches it. Instantly his Doppelganger appears. We are in the presence of TWO IDENTICAL HEADMASTERS. All react again. The HEADMASTER DOPPLEGANGER ‘At last we are to be released – You (indicating some SENIORS) tie him up with that sheet. (covering his ears) Oh what a strange sound you people make. (Staccato robotic delivery)At - the - moment - I - don’t - know

quite - what – I - think – until - I - hear - myself - say - it. Oh yes I meant that. What a funny Language – language? – language? – Oh yes is that what **you** call it? – yes **Language**. Its too exhausting – I'll speak to you again for now, through your minds' The SENIORS once again appear hypnotised and do as they are told. We hear the HEADMASTER (Telepathically) say 'Now this won't take long – each take turns to touch TRISKAIDEKA'. Each SENIOR touches the TRISKAIDEKA SKULL and instantly their DOPPLEGANGER appears. They are now in lines facing themselves. One of the SENIOR GIRLS says 'do I really look like that?' Her DOPPLEGANGER replies 'I'm afraid so – painful isn't it'. All the DOPPLEGANGERS laugh. The SENIOR GIRL gives a wide eyed vacant cheek attitude ' Ugh?'. The DOPPLEGAGERS speak the following words robotically individually one after the other. 'You - are - now – under - our – control – and – for – now - will - not - be – able - to - leave – this - room – it - is - a shielded – vacuum - from - which – you - cannot -leave'. The HEADMASTER DOPPLEGANGER picks up the TRISKAIDEKA SKULL saying out loud 'CHARRIONS – follow me'. All the SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS follow out of the room

26 – INT.STAIRCASE. NIGHT

Cut to seeing the SENIOR DOPPLGANGERS walking down the staircase to the HEADMASTERS study.

27 – INT/EXT. HEADMASTERS STUDY. NIGHT

SENIOR DOPPLGANGERS Walking into the study.

28 – INT. HEADMASTERS STUDY. NIGHT

We see the SKULL being placed in a prominent position by the HEADMASTER. All the SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS watch. HEADMASTER 'CHARRIONS We now are here – and you will soon have all the power you need for your journey'. SENIORS DOPPLEGANGERS gesticulating in a robotic manner 'Yes - the - energy - we – are – getting - from - these - capsules – is - as - we - expected' they all mutter agreement 'these – young - Homo - sapiens – will - give - us - time - to - achieve - our - goal'. As each SENIOR speaks their voices change and faces morph in Close Up to a GREY ALIEN visage and then back to the their features. HEADMASTER morphing 'as your CHARRION ELDER I have had to become this older capsule and this is an energy that will lose power – you will have to protect me from this Homo sapiens GOOD SOUL'. They all laugh in a terrifyingly knowing sinister manner .

29 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. NIGHT

The SENIOR BOYS & GIRLS in the bedroom are moving and talking as if struggling through treacle – their normal personalities are present but energy levels depleted as the DOPPLEGANGERS draw on their energy. JOSH & CLAIRE are trying to take control and organise untying the HEADMASTER who is drained and asleep. They lie him down on a bed. CLAIRE 'That was a Crystal Skull – like STEVE said when he walked in – the Indiana Jones film – Kingdom of The Crystal Skull – but that was no prop!' JOSH 'Yeah – I read up on them only the other day – ancient South

American Maya Indian legend says there were 13 Crystal Skulls belonging to THE GODDESS OF DEATH. All appear suitably fearfully apprehensive. ‘over the past centuries 5 of them have been discovered by archaeologists and either kept by them and their families or gifted to museums. Eight are yet to be found. CLAIRE ‘Seven’. All acknowledge what she is inferring. JOSH ‘Yes – now with this one only seven – you’re right – if this **is** – the thing is they say that if all are brought together again life as we know it will never be the same again’. CLAIRE ‘And don’t we know it!’. All are now seriously frightened. SALLY ‘but that does not mean it has to be for the worse – I saw a documentary about them and it said that when all thirteen are all together we will learn great things about our past and our future –the Maya legend says they will give us the answers to are existence and help us – no more wars and poverty’. CLAIRE ‘Are you mad – THE GODDESS OF DEATH and look at what is happening to us now’.

30 – EXT. CORNFIELD. DAWN

A small group of SENIOR STUDENT REPORTERS presenting to camera ‘The farmer who owns this land is extremely angry that his crop has been ruined in this way – who do you think is responsible?’ FARMER ‘ Kids having a prank – must have been a lot of them mind – look – candle torches, wine bottles and cigarette butts are everywhere. If they wanted us to believe it was Aliens they should have cleaned up after them – too much to expect of this generation – they wouldn’t litter their own homes like this though would they’. STUDENT REPORTER ‘All right DAD – don’t go on – cut’. FARMER ‘You do mind (litter home)! This should help you lot and your Media Studies SON – you should be able to sell this to the local TV News station – I told you it was worth getting up for. Good job you lot were all staying over after your party last night.’ JAMES ‘Why don’t we clean up all the mess – and pretend its real – that would be good enough for National news coverage’. FARMER ‘Yeah and when you get found out – as you would – the end of a promising career for you all’. Sean ‘I’ve a better idea – I am not one of you Mickie Mouse nambie pamby Media Studies students – I am going to have a real job!’ GROUP ‘OK Sherlock Holmes – what do you suggest’ SEAN ‘Exactly – that’s what I’m going to be and that’s what we are going to do now – for your DAD we will detect who was responsible for this and get them to confess on camera – like they do in those TV exposure programmes. FARMER ‘Now you’re talking – that’ll make an even better local news story for you all – students unearth hoax’ SEAN ‘Yes and I already have an idea it has something to do with that Performing Arts Summer School over there that your sister/brother is at’.

31 – INT. HEADMASTERS STUDY. DAWN

HEADMASTER & SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS are circling the CRYSTAL SKULL in ritual, they intone ‘GODDESS OF DEATH we see you’.

From the SKULL appears THE GODDESS OF DEATH transported from Planet Charrion (She is dressed and made up like an extreme modern day GOTH)

GODDESS ‘Few – what a journey’

dusting herself off. The SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS do a choreographed stand, turn, kneel & bow of their heads.

GODDESS ‘Oh stop all that (double take) Oh – you look almost human!’

all laugh morphing to their Alien personas and back.

GODDESS ‘Don’t spoil it! Those capsules you inhabit were made in *my* image when our creator CHAOS asked me to create my own experiment on this TERRESTRIAL ORB. (touching the globe) Out of all the ORBS in all the UNIVERSES this has always been *my* favourite of course for that reason. You have *your* own favourite ORB that carries *your* likeness – (teasing them) though personally I often think looking at the likes of you I got the better deal. I mean just look at - us!’

looking at herself in the mirror – nothing is reflected back –SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS laugh.

GODDESS ‘Oh – yes I forgot – in my image – but we CHARRIONS have no SOUL as these *MUTANT HUMANOID*S call it and so are unable to see ourselves. Its enough to make you weep!’

She acts a weeping episode – the SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS imitate her sending up HUMAN emotions.

GODDESS ‘but of course – we cannot weep as these *MUTANTS* have developed – only laugh’

They all laugh

SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS (once again sharing the dialogue robotically) ‘soon you will be able to see yourself *and* we will all be able to weep with joy – *our destiny* – you created all these humanoids and you will consume all of them – it is in *your nature* GODDESS OF DEATH (they laugh). And then we will have the secret to how they have mutated from HUMANOIDS like ourselves - to having this mutation inside themselves that they call a *SOUL* that gives them the weeping emotion. Of all the creations in all the universes we CHARRIONS need this mutation to be able to travel without our crafts as spirits to other dimensions where we will find and conquer our creator CHAOS who is saying these HUMANIS are more interesting and affectionate than us. (mock CHAOS as being dumb pointing to heads) Durr... This is how we will save CHARRION and no longer will there be (said with nasty taste in mouth) *HUMAN SOULS* fluttering about all over CHARRION creating dimensional interference. They are *so boring* when they sometimes get through to try and teach us how to have *feelings*’

GODDESS ‘Quite so – Quite so! But to be honest *you* are becoming quite *boring* yourselves droning on from those capsules you are inhabiting – oh dear did I hurt your HUMAN *feelings*’

SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS ‘Ugh’ they shudder at the thought of such things

GODDESS ‘But I suppose it would take me too long to teach you how to speak properly like me. And *long* is not what we have. The excitement is too great! Oh look

- that over there is Inspiration Water that I saw your capsule (to HEADMASTER) enjoy while I was watching from CHARRION last night. Do what he did - put it in a glass and tip it down this hole (pointing to her mouth) for us to celebrate what is to be – our destiny - to unite TRISKAIDEKA here with all the other 12 CRYSTAL SKULLS that we scattered around this ORB when we gave it Humanoid life in my likeness. When you have succeeded in using your capsules energy to transport yourselves to find them and bring them here – so that the twelve may join TRISKAIDEKA (touching the skull) we will take them to where you beamed down – and there will be our *destiny* - as the great knowledge of these HUMANOID MUTANTS that these SKULLS have been recording in their crystals will be transported to our CENTRAL CRYSTAL on CHARRION where they will tell us how it is that these creatures mutated a *SOUL* that we did not create.’

SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS ‘Then WE too will be able to see into our SOULS and love our reflections.’

There is a moment while the GODDESS does a double take at such a thought of the ugly CHARRIONS seeing & loving their reflection.

GODDESS ‘Yes and then you may have cause to weep

They all in unison give her a mock hurt look

GODDESS These Mutant Humanoids superstition of the number 13 – Triskaidekaphobia - as they call it - will have been proved to be correct – The power of our 13 CRYSTAL SKULLS in unison will consume all their SOULS for me GODDESS OF DEATH – it will be my final SOUL-UTION!’

They all groan at her bad joke.

GODDESS ‘Um – poor me another – its making me feel quite HUMAN’.

SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS - ‘UGH’

backing away and then laughing and pouring her another drink.

32 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. DAWN

SENIORS who have been listening with glasses to the floor to the conversation below. Consternation and discussion ensue ‘How are we going to stop them?’ etc. SENIORS ‘Its just as we said and there is a Goddess of Death!’

33 – INT. JUNIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. DAWN

The girls are asleep – there is a scratching sound – one of them slowly wakes wondering what the noise is – we pan with her view point to the Ouiji Board – the planchette is moving on its own across the letters – she wakes the others – they all look in fear being drawn to see what the board is saying.

‘ALIENS’

They scream and run out

34 – INT. HEADMASTERS STUDY. DAWN

SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS ‘What is that?’

GODDESS ‘Oh it will be all those sweet little JUNIOR ones getting ready for breakfast.’

SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS ‘Ugh’

they bridle at the thought of Human children.

GODDESS ‘Do not worry – you have work to do – while you are transporting I and the HEADMASTER here will make sure no one can get into this room’.

HEADMASTER ‘it will be sealed’

GODDESS ‘Meanwhile HEADMASTER I want you to introduce me to these little JUNIOR HUMANS as their new Performing Arts Teacher. I feel in the mood for a bit of fun’.

SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS ‘Ugh’

Once again bridling at the thought of Human children.

35 – INT. JUNIOR BOYS DORMATORY. DAWN

JUNIOR GIRLS ‘We tell you the thing – whatever its called ...’

JUNIOR BOY ‘planchette’

JUNIOR GIRLS ‘was moving on its own and spelled out ALIENS!’

JUNIOR BOYS ‘Yeah – very funny – we’ll see you at breakfast – if we don’t watch it we’ll miss it - we’re going to be late.

JUNIOR GIRLS ‘It’s true’

JUNIOR BOYS ‘Go’

36 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. DAWN

SENIORS ‘The Goddess is getting drunk – she likes drink – but cannot take it – perhaps that’s how we could ...I can hear the JUNIORS call out for them to come and help

They try to get out of the door and windows and call out

SENIOR ‘ Remember they said we were sealed in a vacuum – that’s just what it is - we are making all this noise – we are banging and shouting – but they cannot hear us. It is as if this room has been sound proofed – we cannot open the doors or windows –

we can here sound coming in but they obviously can here nothing coming out. Its as if we are inside a vacuum.

JOSH – perhaps they have put us in a worm hole – a black hole’

SENIOR ‘a dumb hole’.

SENIOR ‘In space no one can here you scream’

They all react to this

37 – INT. BREAKFAST ROOM. DAY

JUNIOR BOYS & GIRLS are gathered helping themselves to cornflakes etc.

JUNIOR BOY 1 ‘You know the girls said Aliens’

JUNIOR BOY 2 ‘ Well - I dreamt of a SKULL – it was no ordinary Skull – and it came in a spaceship.’

JUNIOR BOY 1 ‘You can’t have - that’s what I dreamt of’

JUNIOR BOY 3 ‘And me’

Word spreads amongst them all – the girls slowly remember the same –

JUNIOR GIRLS (realising significance) Aliens

All have had a similar dream. Suddenly beside them appears THE GODDESS OF DEATH from nowhere

GODDESS ‘ Well – I wonder what could have caused that then’.

All scream

GODDESS ‘Oh Headmaster please – come in and explain’.

HEADMASTER (comes into the room) ‘Don’t worry –THEA DOGFODDESS is a surprise guest teacher that I have specially arranged for you today’. (As he says this his face morphs into his Alien persona and back.)

GODDESS (whispering) ‘Go back – you must lie down – you’re in an old capsule and losing power’.

JUNIORS (whispering) ‘did you see what happened to STEVE then?’.

HEADMASTER ‘ Don’t worry – you are in safe...(notices hands are changing – hides behind his back)’

GODDESS (to him) ‘Go go go’.

She shuffles him out of the French doors as he struggles with his transformation back to a CHARRION ALIEN.

GODDESS ‘Yes what STEVE did not tell you – is that I am a special guest specialising in – magic! –
First lesson – now what you are eating all looks rather dreary – wouldn’t you prefer to have this...

The corn flakes etc are changed to McDonald Type Burgers – (no packaging avoid advertising specific chain)

gasp in disbelief as they react some screaming some screaming with delight.

38 – EXT. SCHOOL DRIVE. DAY

News Reporter Students coming down the drive – ‘listen to that – Drama Students over acting as usual’.

39 – EXT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY WINDOW. DAY

Seniors looking out of the window at them trying to attract their attention.

40 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY WINDOW. DAY

POV of Reporters coming down the drive

41 – INT. BREAKFAST ROOM. DAY

GODDESS ‘Now second lesson’

THEA DOGFODDESS appears again from another position

JUNIOR 4 (sarcastically) ‘Do you have to keep on doing that – why not walk like everyone else’

The **GODDESS** spikes her hand at the **JUNIOR 4’s** burger – it instantly changes to a large juicy slug.

GODDESS ‘Anyone else have any complaints?’

Silence

‘Now as I was saying – the second lesson I want to teach you is...’

42 - INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. DAY

POV of HEADMASTER DOPPLEGANGER through window in garden.

SENIORS ‘Look at what ‘s happened to Steve Down There’

We see his HEADMASTER DOPPLEGANGER has fully morphed back into the ELDER CHARRION ALIEN

STEVE’s energy having been released has been waking up during this time and is now standing

HEADMASTER STEVE ‘what’s happening?’

all turn to see him

SENIORS ‘look Steve – look you were down there’

He looks through the window and sees himself with morphed head and hands.

CLAIRE ‘ I get it – they created a clone from us and are keeping us running like batteries somehow drawing on our energy – Steve has woken up and his supply of energy to his clone has weakened the clones resistance and the alien inside is manifesting itself.’

JOSH ‘the stronger we all get the more likely it is that our clones will no longer hide the parasite alien inside’.

SENIOR ‘The CHARRION – they called themselves CHARRIONS.’

HEADMASTER STEVE ‘Come on - all follow me’

SENIORS ‘we can’t – they have trapped us in this room.’

43 – EXT. SCHOOL.DAY

we see SENIOR REPORTERS spot ELDER CHARRION ALIEN HEADMASTER they hide and watch

SENIOR REPORTERS ‘Whey ...look at that ...etc’

Then suddenly **he vanishes** – SENIOR REPORTERS look at each other in disbelief.

44 – INT. BREAKFAST ROOM. DAY

We see all the JUNIORS huddled around a PLASMA SCREEN the ELDER CHARRION ALIEN HEADMASTER **Beams in** standing next to the TV to switch it on

GODDESS ‘Now if you are all ready - here your second lesson comes - watch the screen’

ELDER CHARRION ALIEN HEADMASTER switches it on.

the following scene from the headmasters study is playing through

45 – INT. HEADMASTERS STUDY. DAY

We see a close up of the CRYSTAL SKULL pulling back to reveal all of the SENIOR DOPPLEGANGERS – one at a time they touch the skull and instantly disappear. When all have gone we close in on the CRYTAL SKULL – it vanishes – we cut straight to scene 47

46 - INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. DAY

X CUTTING with previous scene but this scene not shown on the plasma screen

SENIORS fall to the ground into a deep sleep in exactly the position they are in as each one of their SENIOR DOPPLGANGERS vanish from the PLASMA SCREEN screen.

HEADMASTER STEVE is left standing surrounded by them all inert on the floor horrified. Out of the window we have seen flashes **lightening** energy representing the clones flying off through the air on their mission.

47 – INT. BREAKFAST ROOM. DAY

The plasma screen instantly cuts out as the CRYSTAL SKULL disappears on screen. The JUNIORS look around to the GODDESS to see her hands out stretched towards the screen and the CRYSTAL SKULL suddenly appear in her hands.

48 – EXT. SCHOOL.DAY

SENIOR REPORTERS ‘First that weird looking dood looked as if it disappeared and it had a pretty realistic mask on as well’ etc. ‘it was so good – I wanted to applaud when it vanished like that and what a finale with all the **lightening** – I think we should get some tickets for the show - lets ask how they did it - Come on ring the door bell’.

49 - INT. BREAKFAST ROOM. DAY

We hear the Very loud DOOR BELL. The Juniors are now petrified unable to take their eyes off ELDER CHARRION ALIEN HEADMASTER STEVE

GODDESS (holding the Crystal Skull)‘would you all like to answer the door for us’

JUNIORS (in unison seeing this as a chance to escape) ‘yes!’.

GODDESS ‘Well you cannot – this rooms is now sealed – for your own safety of course - I’ll take TRISKAIDEKA here with me and leave your new HEAD (she laughs at her joke) to explain himself while I answer the door.

She goes

50 – INT. HEADMASTERS STUDY. DAY

GODDESS rushes in puts down SKULL – grabs the bottle of whisky – hurriedly takes a swig – exits

51 - INT. STAIRCASE.DAY

GODDESS runs up the staircase

52 - INT.CORRIDOR..DAY

GODDESS rushing to SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY

53 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. DAY

GODDESS bursts in. HEADMASTER STEVE turns around in midst of sleeping SENIORS that he has been trying to wake up.

GODDESS ‘you need to answer the door – didn’t you hear the bell ring?’

HEADMASTER STEVE (confused) ‘who are you?’

GODDESS ‘I have come to rescue you all – but first for your own safety tell whoever it is at the door – to come back another day’

HEADMASTER STEVE ‘and if I don’t?’

GODDESS ‘all of you will die’.

54 - EXT. SCHOOL FRONT DOOR. DAY

STUDENT REPORTERS ‘come on – lets just walk in – it’s a school – why are we ringing the bell anyway – there will be a reception inside’

they enter.

55A - INT. STAIRCASE/HALLWAY. DAY

STEVE coming down the staircase followed by GODDESS – turning the corner – bump into STUDENT REPORTERS.

SEAN ‘Oh – Hello –as no one had answered - we thought there must be a reception we could leave a note at’

GODDESS ‘what – to say you had robbed the safe – thank you very much!’.

SEAN ‘ No! we are here to ask a few questions about crop circles’.

GODDESS (laughs hysterically)

all look at her including HEADMASTER STEVE who is more bemused than anyone.

HEADMASTER STEVE ‘Crop circles?’.

55B – INT. STAIRCASE/HALLWAY.DAY

Same as above – without GODDESS in shot

56 – INT. BREAKFAST ROOM. DAY

The JUNIORS are sitting watching ELDER HEADMASTER CHARRION ALIEN STEVE who has fallen asleep – they try to escape but find the same as the others had – that they are sealed in. Whispered conversation along the lines of lets tie him up – good idea – very quietly that is what they do finding a box of skipping ropes.

GEAK (who has been writing reveals) ‘ we were told the GOTH Teacher’s name was THEA DOGFODDESS. Its an anagram – all the letters moved around from that name spell out GODDESSS OF DEATH’.

In unison all the JUNIORS try to escape bashing at the windows and doors. ALIEN STEVE is shocked awake.

57 – EXT. BREAKFAST ROOM FRENCH WINDOWS.DAY

we see but hear nothing of the JUNIORS TRYING frantically to escape.

58 – INT/EXT.SCHOOL FRONT DOOR. DAY

STUDENT REPORTERS being shown out.

GODDESS ‘Sorry we cannot help – perhaps they really were made by Aliens from out of space’

She roars with laughter slamming the door in their faces.

59 - EXT. SCHOOL FRONT DOOR. DAY

STUDENT REPORTERS

SEAN ‘I don’t believe a word they said – I reckon they know that their students were responsible and are trying to cover up for them’.

STUDENT REPORTER 1 ‘If only we had that interview on camera – we could show them up as liars’ the others’

STUDENT REPORTER 2 ‘we did – we were filming secretly through the bag – just like investigative programmes do’

SEAN ‘now that is ace – really – lets have a look’.

STUDENT REPORTERS ‘lets get further away from here first’.

60 – INT. HEADMASTERS STUDY. DAY

GODDESS (helping herself to more drink) ‘Are you sure you won’t have one while we wait my warriors return’.

HEADMASTER STEVE ‘Where are the other children?’

GODDESS ‘Oh – very well - follow me’

60B - INT.BREAKFAST ROOM.DAY

JUNIORS milling about still trying to escape

61 - EXT. FRENCH WINDOWS BREAKFAST ROOM. DAY

JUNIORS see HEADMASTER STEVE outside and rush to ask his help – but once again like a bad dream he cannot hear them only see their pleading. He focuses in alarm on ELDER CHARRION HEADMASTER STEVE who has broken free from being tied up and is horrified at seeing an ALIEN close up for the first time.

62 – EXT/INT. FRENCH WINDOWS BREAKFAST ROOM. DAY

GODDESS (opening the door – then we hear their screams and pleadings) ‘Oh dear – Oh dear – Why are you making such a DIN is it DIN-NER TIME’

she once again roars with laughter

HEADMASTER STEVE helpless follows in behind her – they become absolutely silent as ELDER CHARRION HEADMASTER ALIEN STEVE continues to laugh.

GODDESS (goes to ALIEN STEVE whispers in his ear)

ALIEN STEVE vanishes

GEEK ‘you are the GODDESS OF DEATH – what are you going to do with us?’.

GODDESS (to STEVE) ‘Oh you have a clever one here – well what do you think I could do with you – Um?’.

Silence

63 – EXT, WOODS. DAY

STUDENT REPORTERS crouched down in the wood watching the footage. We also see a point of view shot of the footage.

SEAN ‘Where is she?’

STUDENT REPORTERS ‘you tell us Sherlock’.

We see some more footage hearing the GODDESSES voice in the conversation.

SEAN ‘We can hear her – but not see her’.

STUDENT REPORTERS ‘We never did ask how they did that vanishing trick’

SEAN ‘Yeah – well I don’t fancy asking her now’.

STUDENT REPORTERS ‘this woods is spooky enough without all this – lets get back to the farm’.

As they turn ELDER CHARRION HEADMASTER ALIEN STEVE is standing watching them – petrified they stand and watch as one after the other SENIOR

CLONES appear as ALIENS holding a Crystal SKULL each and staring menacingly at the STUDENT REPORTERS.– STUDENT REPORTERS remain stunned.

64 – INT. SENIOR GIRLS DORMATORY. DAY

X CUT to SENIORS in the dormitory slowly waking up as they appear in wood.

SENIORS ‘we can get out’ they start to cautiously make their escape.

JOSH & CLAIRE ‘We have got to stop the union of the SKULLS’.

65 – INT. BREAKFAST ROOM.DAY

JUNIORS ‘she’s gone - look we can get out.

they open the door – they are cautiously free and start to creep out to make an escape. They pass a LARGE POT in the KITCHEN – HEADMASTER STEVE’S HEAD pops out mouthing

HEADMASTER STEVE’S HEAD ‘well what do you think I could do with you’. (It is the GODDESSES voice followed by her inane laughter.)

They react scream etc.

66 - INT.TOP OF THE STAIRS.DAY

SENIORS hearing the noise downstairs listen intently – they creep further downstairs. The study door is open – it is dark inside – in the middle we see the back of a figure in a hooded cloak – slowly it turns around – the image is of THE GRIM REEPER but with the head of the TRISKAIDEKA CRYSTAL SKULL holding a GLOBE with a bottle instead of a scythe. It is the GODDESS – she roars with a witches cackle – then vanishes – but returns in the same place – vanishes again but returns. Once again tries to transport but her powers have gone because.

JOSH & CLAIRE ‘She can’t move – she’s drunk!’.

There is an enormous gush of wind through the house.

CLAIRE ‘get the SKULL’

JOSH ‘How – its her head’

CLAIRE ‘Rip it off!’.

They both do so – there is an almighty echoing scream – the figure vanishes leaving them holding the SKULL.

67 – EXT. WOOD. DAY

The STUDENT REPORTERS now alone still mesmerised start to get to grips with the situation looking towards the corn field and start filming and reporting.

68 – CORNFIELD. DAY

The corn field where the ORB was first found. We see in a circle the SENIOR ALIENS holding up the 12 Skulls above their heads – they vanish - as a flying saucer hovers down and disappears leaving a hurricane force wind in its wake

69 – X CUTTING – EXT. EDGE OF CORNFILD. DAY

THE STUDENT REPORTERS filming

THE JUNIORS watching through the hedges

SENIORS watching agog.

STEVE (with the cooking pot on his head) otherwise back to normal watching.

JOSH & CLAIRE holding the TRISKAIDEKA CRYSTAL SKULL.

70 – EXT. EDGE OF CORNFIELD. DAY

We close in on the TRISKAIDEKA CRYSTAL SKULL being held by JOSH & CLAIRE to extreme close up and see it say

GODDESSES VOICE ‘ SOUL -long – got anything for a hangover? Make mine a double’.

Freeze frame.

Credits.

THE END

Pronunciation

tris – kai – dek –a = TRISS –K.EYE - DECKER

tris·kai·dek·a·pho·bi·a = TRISS – K.EYE – DECKER – PHOBIA

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