BTEC L2 Creative Media Production
Unit 1 Research

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6384 words
20 pages

INDEX

What makes a supernatural horror short film viable?

Introduction

Background

As an "aspiring filmmaker, eager to break onto the short film festival circuit" *(kgvmedia.com)*, I wanted to better understand what makes a supernatural horror short film viable for production. After multiple rewrites and development, I produced a draft of my treatment for my short film, which I wanted to evaluate the feasibility of through a variety of research techniques.

Logline

Shadows is a supernatural horror short film about a teenage girl who is tormented and chased by a monster lurking in the depths of the darkness as she makes her way to a late-night party.

Treatment

Act 1: Insecure, and worried she's late, a teenage girl walks down a dark empty street, making her way to a party. Pausing shortly to put on makeup, she then puts everything back in her purse and begins to walk again.

Act 2: Moments later, a sinister whisper freezes her. She whips around. Nothing. Taking a deep breath, the girl begins to walk once more. Suddenly, a bell tolls and a hooded, masked figure steps into view. She sees him unnervingly pick up Rubik's Cube and rotate it calmly. The sound of clocks ticking add tension to the scene.
Terrified, she runs. As she turns the corner, a harsh, distorted voice reverberates from everywhere, threatening her. She freezes and spins around desperately trying to locate the source. The figure reappears and calmly turns the cube again.
The girl runs again, the figure following. Thinking she has outrun it, she catches her breath behind a wall.
The bell tolls again and the figure comes into focus once again.
Horrified, she gets up and runs – but trips and falls. Gasping in pain, she touches the wound – suddenly the voice is back in her head, from everywhere. She lets go – now the figure is there, walking towards her! She cries out, trying to get up. He edges forward as she crawls back.

Act 3: The figure turns the cube – the colours align perfectly! The figure howls triumphantly, and begins edging forward.

Significance, definition of success

The significance of this study is that it will majorly help me in developing both my treatment and the overall idea so that the final product is something that is not only well made, but also something that people will want to watch.

I will measure the success of my film after its production with the same format and parameters I utilize when evaluating others' professionally made films; that is, a range of measurements including reviews, ratings, etcetera.

Definition of terms

- **Demographics:** separation of people by income and occupation
- **Psychographics:** separation of people by how they think and what their psychological attributes are
- Uses and gratifications
    - **Diversion** - for entertainment / to go into 'another world'
    - **Personal relationships** - to associate with those who consume the same media / to maintain a place in a social group
    - **Personal identity** - to express themselves and who they are / to empathize which characters
    - **Surveillance** - for knowledge / to find out
- **Quantitative data:** numbers; numerical data, facts, and figures. Highly objective.
- **Qualitative data:** description and opinions; often characterizes responses through subjective approximation

- **Interview:** a one-on-one recorded conversation where an interviewer asks the interviewee questions that they have to answer
- **Focus group:** a group of people whose responses are studied as if they were representative of a larger population
- **Observation:** closely monitoring phenomena in an unobtrusive method
- **Questionnaire / survey:** asking a set of printed questions for the respondent to answer. Mostly quantitative.

Figure 1: An interview. Image labelled for reuse.

Primary Research

Audience research

As part of my audience research, I employed three methods: a **questionnaire**, multiple **interviews**, and a **focus group**.

I chose to send out the questionnaire to about 40 people, sampling a variety of ages (from 11 to 17), ethnic groups, genders, and psychographics. My **response rate** was 92.5% and I was able to amass 37 responses.
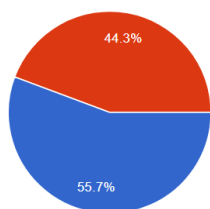

Figure 2: Example pie chart – survey results could be categorized

My rationale behind using a questionnaire was that I could get **many responses, quickly**. This form of data collection was **standardized** with **categorized** ways of collecting information, which allowed for **effective analysis**. The sense of 'anonymity' may have been present with respondents as there was no 'face' to talk to, which allowed for **openness** and a sense of **candor**; respondents could broach topics of discussion through a comment box at the end of the questionnaire.

I also chose to use interviews as a means to gather more information, as I found that people were more **thorough** in their answers simply if they were speaking them instead of typing them. Despite the fact that this was a **lengthier process** than the questionnaire, I received far more **substantial data** from this research.

I additionally decided to conduct a focus group so a **stratified sample** of people **representative** of the population could answer **open-ended questions** and take part in **discussions**, which was further more **revealing**. I was also able to engage with **multiple individuals simultaneously**, which was more **efficient**.
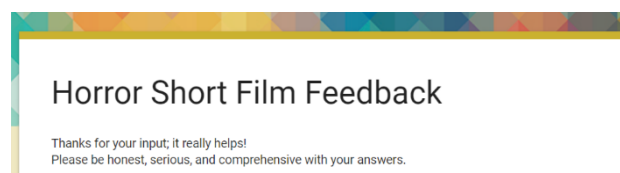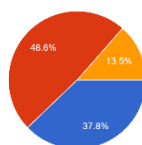

Horror Short Film Feedback

Thanks for your input; it really helps!
Please be honest, serious, and comprehensive with your answers.

Figure 3: I used bright colours, a modern font, and a welcoming introduction to attract responses

Findings: **questionnaire**
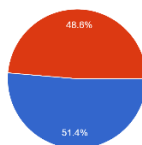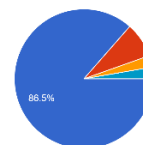
Despite sending out my survey to a largely varied sample of individuals, I got a higher number of 13- to 15-year-old respondents. This meant I had a **sample bias** which could affect my results. However, this fact was virtually negligible as the gaps between the age groups were not large. In addition, my target audience were teens (13 to 18) anyways, which made up a healthy 62.1% of my responses.

The more concerning sample bias was of ethnicities; an unavoidable consequence of having a majority Asian student body. 86.5% of my respondents were Asian and despite my efforts to include other ethnicities, I had to work with this number. Luckily, the majority of my questions were universal and personal opinion-based.

My gender separation was almost in a 1:1 ratio.

Do you enjoy the horror genre?
37 responses

- Yes
- No

56.8% / 43.2%
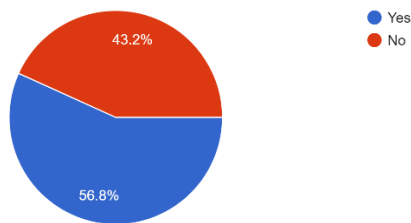
What do you think of supernatural horror films?
37 responses

5 (13.5%), 6 (16.2%), 5 (13.5%), 8 (21.6%), 7 (18.9%), 6 (16.2%)

Unfortunately, there was a very small gap between the number of people who do and don't like the horror genre, and an almost equal distribution of how much people enjoy supernatural horror short films. This means that I may have to incorporate other subgenres into my short film so that I can appeal to a larger audience. If this were not my aim, this data would be redundant.
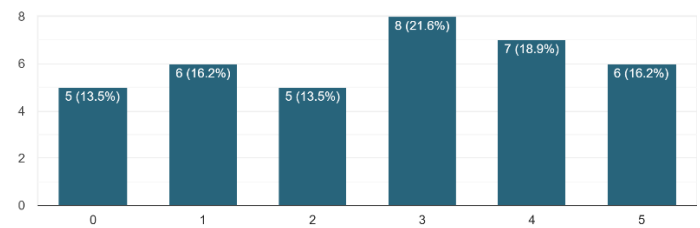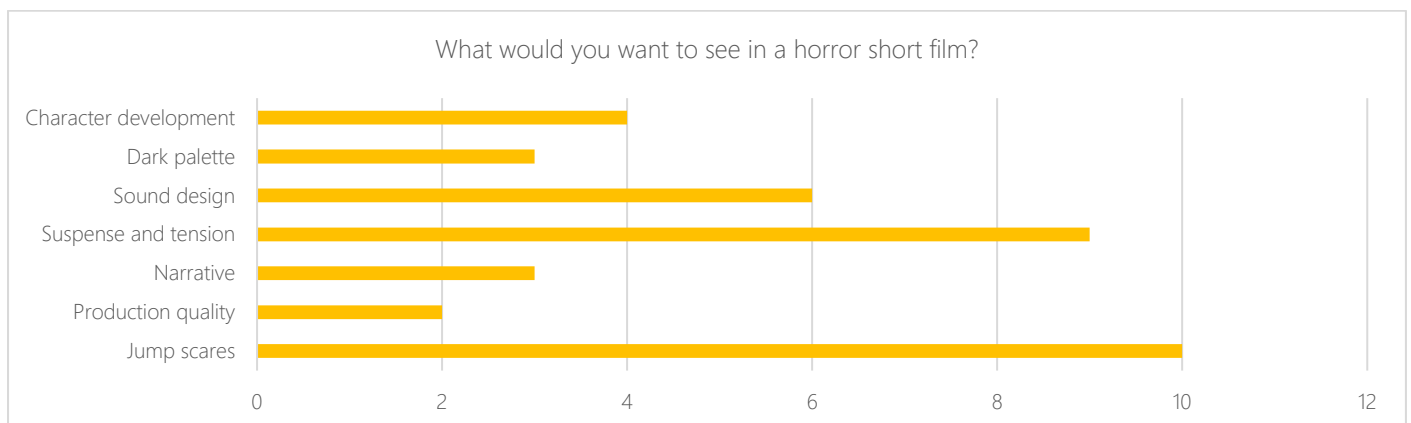
If you were to watch a horror film, what would you look for in it?

37 responses

Three key points, separated by commas, please!

As these responses were given as three key points, I was able to process and categorize them into more comprehensible quantitative data.

What would you want to see in a horror short film?

Category	Value
Character development	4
Dark palette	3
Sound design	6
Suspense and tension	9
Narrative	3
Production quality	2
Jump scares	10

Responses show that the audience looks to horror films for fright and surprise; they want to be *scared*. It is visible that respondents choose to see something scary over something largely coherent (i.e. with a strong sense of narrative or well-developed characters).

I will have to include jump scares and build tension in my short film, while also paying close attention to the look and feel of the production. My narrative should also be coherent, as this is part of the demand from the audience.

After being presented with my treatment, I asked respondents to score it on a scale of 0 (awful) to 10 (excellent).

What do you think of it?
37 responses
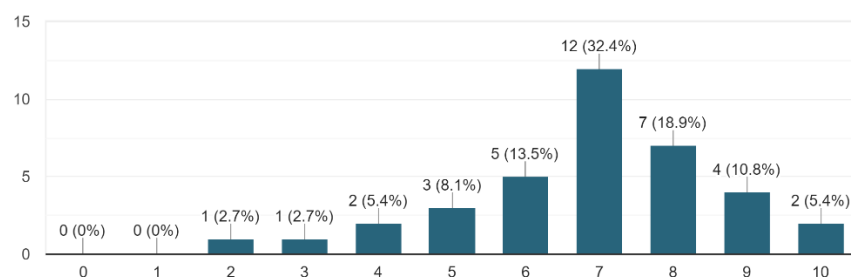
With a majority score of 7 (and a steady rise and drop to and from that score), I can see that there is a generally positive response to my treatment. This means that I should expect to please the better part of my target audience with my short film in terms of the narrative it conveys.

However, 12 people (32%) of people voted that my treatment was below 7/10, and it is these people I have to develop my treatment to please. My next question was written to find out how I could go about doing this.

Why?
37 responses

Again, I asked respondents to give three key words, which I was able to categorize.

⊗ **Cliché**

⊗ **Anticlimactic**

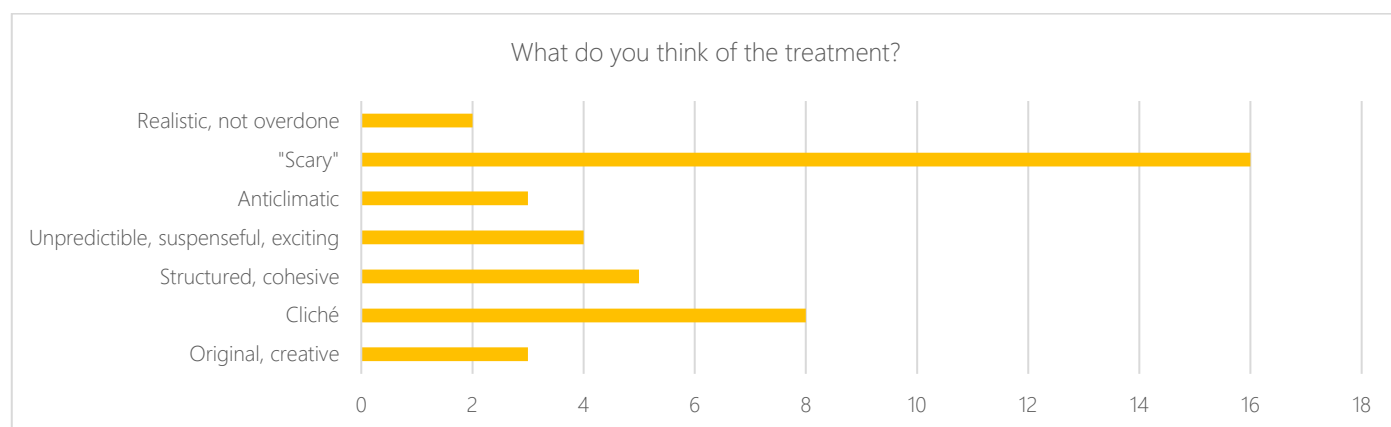Despite the fact that some people found the treatment to be original and creative, others felt that it was not original enough and had "typical horror film" vibes. I could rectify these issues by keeping the plot the same but cutting back and forth between acts or rearranging events – however, I am worried that this might confuse the viewer with incoherent scenes in the short length of the film. So, another thing I could to is add a twist at the end – for example, the victim fights back at the last moment, lashing out and attacking her tormenter.

In addition, even though some people felt that the treatment "end[ed] at [a] climax", others felt that Act 3 was a little underwhelming. I could resolve this issue by either doing away with the existing Act 3, or by ending the film on a cliffhanger via another way sans a howling antagonist. For example, the victimizer (monster) could reveal their face (or the silhouette of it, at least) at the end, or take out a weapon from their pocket.

In spite of my worries regarding the addition of a simple Rubik's Cube to my treatment, which would be a symbol associated with the monster (along with sound effects), most respondents actually voluntarily commended this means of creating suspense in the *'anything else you would like to add?'* section.

The whole motif of the Rubix cube, the suspense created during the chase scene

The rubix cube thing gives a good sense of structure, i like it

Good story line, good use of cube

the plot is original, I want to know what happens after the cube alligns

Rubik's Cube is a fun and new concept that represents the stages of the story, turning a normal activity into something terrifying, nothing overdone.

the idea of the rublix cube is very unique

As long as I can make it blatantly obvious that the Rubik's Cube is associated with the monster and provides as a warning that danger is imminent, and also not confuse the audience as to whether it is a weapon or not, I should be able to utilize the power of its iconography to form a well-structured narrative.

Findings: **interviews**

I interviewed 6 people; 3 males and 3 females. As I wanted to gather information as varied as possible, I interviewed
- 3 Indians,
- 2 Chinese, and
- 1 New Zealander

I was aware that I had a biased sample in terms of ethnicity, but in a school with a large Indian population, I found it difficult to find people of varied ethnicities. Nevertheless, my sample was not too skewed as I was able to interview different age groups.

Below were my interview questions.

1) What did you think of the treatment? Why?
2) How could I improve?
3) Do you like horror short films? Why?
4) What conventions do you think are intrinsic to the horror genre?
5) If you were to watch a horror film, would you sympathize with the protagonist? Why?
6) If you were to watch a horror film, would it be for entertainment or for another purpose?
7) What genres of film do you like? Why?
8) How would you describe yourself? Psychographics?
9) Do you think horror films do well financially? Why?

Figure 4: My interview questions

Below are some excerpts from interview transcriptions. Key words are in bold.

How could I improve the treatment (and what is good about it)?

"यार, ऑडियंस को thrill आना चाहिए!"
Make sure audience experiences **exhilaration** *[and not just fright]!*

"It's very **original** [...] but you need to **justify** the girl's actions more. [...], I mean, why is she running?"

"The Rubik's Cube [...] just makes it more **interesting**, so that's good. But I feel the story is a bit **cliché**, because of the repeated use of genre [conventions]."

"I can just imagine what it'll sound like, and that builds **tension** well."

"Adding **another character** or a **plot twist** would improve it, but it's a short film so [it may not be possible]."

Do you like horror short films and why?

"I often watch horror. The most important thing for me is superficiality [in short films]."

"I don't like the horror [genre] because in the end the monster's face is always revealed [and that just ruins it for me]."

"I don't like being scared, so I don't [watch horror films]. But if I did, I want them to be well-made; I like well-made film."

Would you like to sympathize with the victim in a horror film?

Yes   No
5   1

This shows that audiences are looking to connect with the protagonist. I will have to give great depth to my character in the short length of my short film so that my audience can sympathize them and better understand how they are feeling. Doing so should make my film more enjoyable to watch overall.

Why would you choose to watch a horror film?
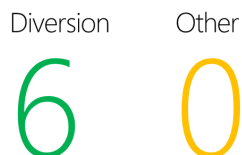
Diversion   Other
6   0

This simply proves that I have to make my film enjoyable above all other things – it should exist for diversion; for entertainment. *Hence, focusing on making the film as realistic as possible is not completely necessary if it hampers the short film's enjoyability (the audience is not looking for surveillance).*

Mainstream   Aspirer   Other
5   1   0

This data was based on inference by prompting the interviewee with a set of questions that helped to deduce their psychographic state.

To appeal to this psychographic audience group, I can give my protagonist mainstream characteristics. For example, I have decided to show her looking worried that she will not be on time to a party that her friends will be at. This emphasizes how she wants to fit in with the crowd and not stand out.

Do you think horror *short* films do well financially? Why?

"I don't think short films do well particularly because they're just too short. Most of the time they're just made for award shows or something."

"Apart from [on] YouTube, [I don't know] where they make [...] money. So, I guess these horror short films aren't made to make money?"

"I mean, I like horror, so there's no reason for [horror short films] to do worse than any other genre [of short film]."

"Short films are just for [fun] and not really to make money [...] but they should [...] be enjoyable and exhilarating."

Findings: focus groups

Through an observational analysis of my focus group, I was able to find out what parts of a scene *worked*. I showed my group the short film *2AM: The Smiling Man*, which can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_u6Tt3PqIfQ.
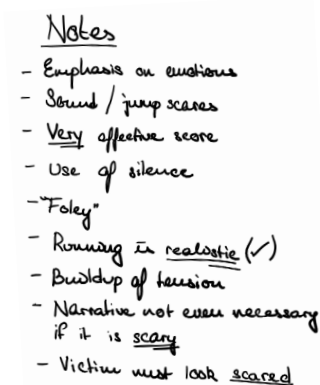

Figure 5: My focus group notes

"[...]"
"The tension was well built."
"Could you explain how you felt the tension building up, and why you thought it was effective?"
"There was the dramatic music…"
"Yeah, and the unnatural occurrences".
"There was the *guy being scared* – if the guy isn't scared, the audience wouldn't be scared."
"Yes. Plus, it was dark."
"Alright. Were there any conventions you noticed that you've seen in other horror films or short films?"
"Music. Definitely. It always plays. Plus, the whole aesthetic of the film is always dark-ish."
"You need *la musique dramatique*!"
"Oui! You need camera shaking, you need weird angles so you feel like you're being watched, you need the character being scared, you need closeups of nervousness!"
"Okay. While watching the film, did you feel like you were sympathizing with the protagonist?"
"In my opinion, in all the other horror films I've watched, the protagonist is stupid. This is the first time they actually *ran*."
"Yeah, that made it so much more realistic!"
"Honestly, he should have run sooner, but I guess then there wouldn't have been tension."
"So you feel like the running made the film more effective?"
[Unanimous agreement] "Yeah. [That's what made] the film good."
"Sure. Were there any other aspects of the film that were similar to those of your favorite genres?"
"I like comedy and action, because they take your mind off things."
"I agree – I like a fast pace and [buildup of] tension."
"But, like, even though this [short] film had all these things, I don't think it was, like, made to make money…"
"You don't think horror short films are designed to be profitable?"
"No, but that's the same for all short films though – it just has to be captivating for the audience, but I there's not much purpose for doing it, except for, like, film festivals or something."

I was also able to deduce the following fact from the questions that followed.

Psychographic analysis based on observations and prompts

100%

■ Mainstream
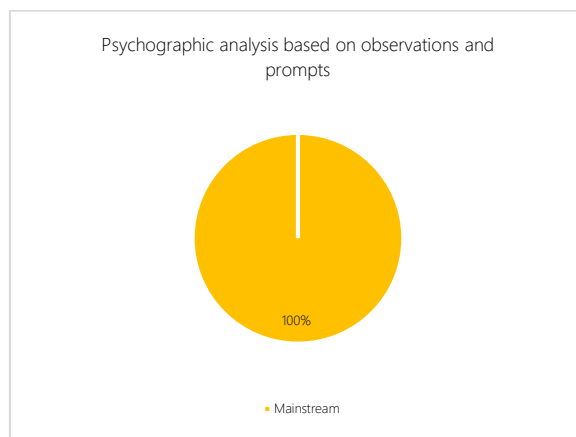
Summary

Audiences desire horror films that make use of the relevant genre conventions over a largely coherent narrative, but still look for logic and sense in the actions of characters. A proper buildup of tension is necessary, along with jump scares.

Additionally, the majority of viewers prefer cliffhangers over anticlimactic endings. The addition of a score and high-quality, relevant Foley sounds boost the overall production value, as well as good colour choices, a dark palette, and competent camera angles and moves. My treatment needs to be developed to become more original, as well as end on a cliffhanger.

The better part of my audience are mainstreamers looking for diversion in a horror short film. They are Asian males and females of age 13 to 15.

Market research

Findings: desk research

By watching 25 horror short films, mostly of the supernatural subgenre, and taking notes on multiple aspects of the production, I was able to better understand what was already available to viewers. This allowed me to get a good grasp of what horror short films should be like, and incorporate such ideas into my own film and treatment. My notes can be found in the APPENDIX section.

There are a few production styles that often crop up in the horror genre.

Horror film directors often go for supernatural, psychological and gory subgenres; these allow for immersive and deliberate narratives. The equilibrium often depicts the protagonist outdoors at night, and this immediately sets the tone and setting of the film while briefly introducing the character – this is paired with a dark, cool palette boasting blue and green hues. An equilibrium, quite often, is extremely short, and sometimes is not even present but instead implied.

Dark, old, isolated and decapitated locations (especially houses) are a favourite among psychological and supernatural horror short films, because they offer a sense of isolation and discomfort. The heavy use of iconography can lead one to the conclusion that these symbolize and connect the viewer to certain humanistic characteristics; crucifixes, blood, knives (among other weapons), claws, dolls, etcetera surface repeatedly.

The victim is almost always a female (young girls and older teens are often victims), highlighting the submissive and supposedly innocent nature usually associated with this gender. The victimizer (and most often antagonist) is often a male (or has masculine characteristics in the likely event that it is a monster or beast of some kind). This suggests to the audience that there is a sense of dominance and (evil and/or masked) power lurking within.

When tension wants to be built, cinematographers often utilize canted angles and extreme closeups (particularly focused on the eyes or face), as well as tracking shots and handheld motion. Low key and hard one (or two) point lighting is often used to make facial features stand out.

Jump scares are used sparingly, and when they are, filmmakers usually build tension through sudden silence or a decrescendo in the score. As the antagonist begins to torment the protagonist, directors often don't show most of – if any – of their body or face; instead sounds associated with the victimizer are heard. Additionally, to reduce noise in footage, filmmakers

often film with sufficient light, then colour grade and correct in post – this gives editors a greater range of freedom for a more refined final product.

In terms of narrative, the enigma is more often than not *"what happens to the protagonist?"* and *"what is the monster and why is it attacking her?"*. These questions do not have to be answered in a horror short film. The binary opposition in the psychological horror genre is within the mind of the protagonist, and in supernatural horror films it is between a victim and monster.

Findings: **shot analyses**

Left: The Moonlight Man / Right: 2AM: The Smiling Man
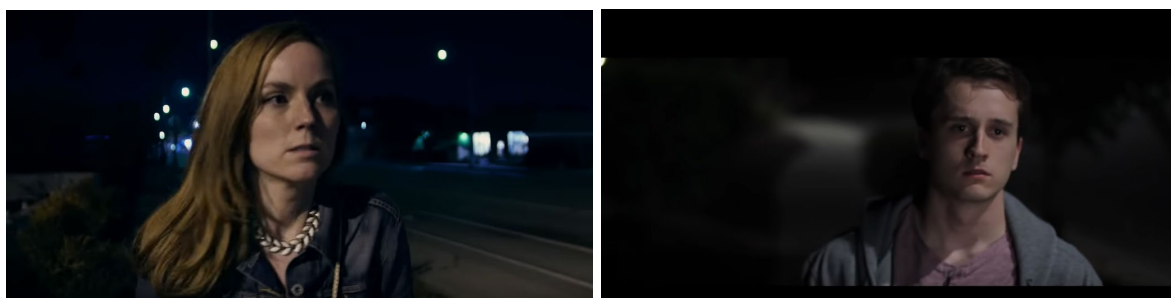
Both introductory shots have a dark palette with a sufficiently lit subject, who is in focus in the foreground. The backgrounds are not in focus and this gives a sense of depth and isolation. The latter shot sports a more professional look, however, as the subject can be seen face-on, the camera has better clarity, and the lighting looks more believable as it originates from overhead, simulating a streetlight. The first shot, on the other hand, has multiple-point lighting from real streetlights, and the subject has light thrown on her face via an additional, artificial-looking light source.

The second shot also has a narrower, more cinematic aspect ratio, which adds to the professional look of the shot. Both shots are at eye level and track backwards with the subject. The shot from The Moonlight Man is handheld, while the other is stationary. The use of handheld motion instills a sense of candidacy in the shot, also telling the viewer that the subject is anxious. This shot makes a good opening as it effectively sets the scene and introduces the character, setting, and equilibrium of the narrative.

Left: Larry / Right: Annie
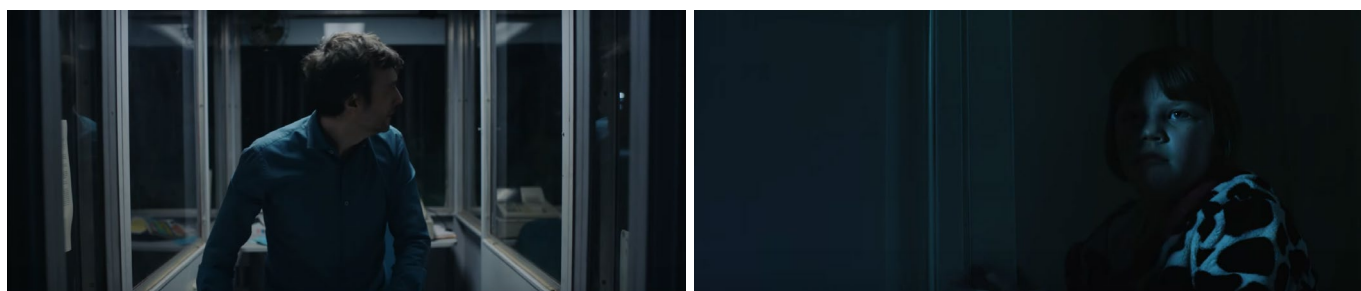
The heavy use of shadows conveys a palpable sense of depth, along with a vivid aura of darkness. The use of a dark and cold palette allows for controlled lighting with definitive highlights and lowlights. In the first shot, the use of diegetic lighting emphasizes the nature of the location – inside a security guard's post – while the second simply uses light as a method of illumination so the subject's face is sufficiently lit and is discernable to the audience.

Both these shots are smooth and steady, tracking the subject's slow movements – this captivates the viewer. The aspect ratio is very wide and this adds to the cinematic look of the shots. The use of a midshot, paired with the shallow depth of field (in the first shot) and a mid-closeup (in the second) highlight the subject's features, movement, stance, and facial expression.

Production research

Equipment

Upon closer inspection of the short films I watched as part of desk research, I have decided to toy with the idea of using the following equipment to shoot my film:

- A SnorriCam rig: this achieves a very personal, slightly unnerving, rather eye-catching, and fairly ambitious effect by literally following every move of the subject, keeping them centered in the frame.
- A dolly: this offers a smooth and steady movement, and will hopefully add a little flair to my film.
- A gimbal: for smooth, professional tracking shots. I also hope to use this for a good, stable dolly zoom that will highlight the loss of control experienced by the protagonist.
- 2 LEDs with blue, yellow and red tinted overlay sheets: to illuminate both my subjects (the victim and victimizer) and the background/setting.
- A DSLR with a high aperture so as to reduce noise when filming at night.
- An H2N sound recorder with a monopod/boom pole and 'dead cat' wind muffler to record sound.

VFX

I am toying with the idea of using quick glitch cuts to switch back and forth between locations to show the audience that the character is in a different location. However, I want to achieve a dreamy look in the second location, so I plan to use lens flares and motion tracking to follow the movement of the camera. As such, I will have to learn the skills to do so.

Software

I will be using Adobe Premiere Pro for my editing and Adobe After Effects for VFX.

Skills

David Fincher. The style of David Fincher is intriguing because every camera shot precisely follows the subject's movements – this highlights the behavior of the character; brings to light their nuances, their repertoire of gestures, of reactions, of styles. This is especially prevalent in his Netflix series Mindhunter, where he uses these subtle pans, tracking shots, tilts, etcetera to effectually lock audiences in. I hope to use this style of camerawork in my short film, especially when the subject initially realizes they are being followed.

Darren Aronofsky. His style is captivating in portraying the psyche of every individual character, both by means of the narrative and cinematography (my interest being in the latter). Aronofsky uses overhead shots to give his audience an aerial view of the setting, while using tilts during motion to show realization or understanding. "Lots of tracking" *(studiobinder.com)* allows for the audience to follow the viewpoint of the subject and feel locked in to their role and behavior, and this is something that I can use in my film too.

Ari Aster/ Peter Greenaway. *Notes from a video by CineFlix.* Director of critically acclaimed horror film *Hereditary*, Ari Aster expressed that his inspiration came from the 1989 film *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*. I found the comments he made on the way the film impacted his opening scene in his work fascinating, and may choose to use some of his tricks in my short film. Aster felt as though opening with animals eating meat was a very "potent metaphor" for the events to foreshadow, animalizing the characters in this somewhat play-like film. This use of iconography is effective.

"Controlled" and "heightened" colours highlight a "nightmarish look" that I hope to achieve in my film too, with the help of LEDs. The use of doll houses in the film is effective in suggesting the characters are "people who have no agency", while the "lateral tracking" and subtle eye for detail really bring to light the multitude of themes present in the film.

Actors and locations

I will have to find a girl to act as my protagonist in my film. She should preferably have acting experience as this is a demanding role.

Location scouting will help me to find suitable locations with a good setting and sufficient lighting. I also do not want to shoot in too isolated places in the interest of safety.

A sound recordist, and someone to help me with lighting and the reflector will also be required.

Length
I do not want my film to exceed 5 minutes, with the length preferably being around 4 minutes.

Secondary Research

Audience research

Desk research: psychological standpoint
According to the Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota, the reason for why people enjoy the horror genre is less because of the fear the experience from it, and more of the thrill; adrenaline-hungry viewers find pleasure in gaining the experience of the flight-or-flight response. According to psychologist Glenn D. Walters, there are three "primary factors that feed the attraction to horror entertainment": tension, relevance, and unrealism, all of which I hope to incorporate into my short film.

Associate professor of communication at Manhattan College, Michael Grabowski focuses on his research in the field of "neurocinematics". He describes how as part of our primal instinct, humans are adapted to be naturally responsive to external stimuli such as screams. "The scream is a way to alert others in your social group and scare off attackers", he explained. Instilling a sense of worry and tension is one of my primary objectives with my horror short, so I could think about integrating such a sound effect too.

Market research

Figure 6: Screengrab from Perspective (2014)

Perspective
Released: 31 October 2014 (YouTube)
Awards: Best Short Film for ages 13-17 – Short4Dordt Film Festival 2014
Box office: unknown
Costs: unknown, but the film looks like it had an extremely low production budget. Shot indoors only at a flight of stairs, and with no dialogue or special effects, it does not look like a lot of money was spent on this project.
Reviews (YouTube): 👍 2.8K 👎 681 (4:1 ratio of likes to dislikes). Graphical representation of key words from comments below.

Last Night

Released: 15 February 2016 (YouTube)

Awards: Hollywood International Moving Pictures Film Festival - Best Short Horror Film (Student)

Box office: unknown

Costs: unknown, but despite the fact that the film was shot inside a house, and that virtually zero costly items can be seen during the film, it can be deduced that *Last Night* had a low, but present, production budget owing to the large number of people involved in its production, as seen in the end credits. Specific people were responsible for lighting, sound, locations, and even SFX.

Reviews (YouTube): 👍 **2.3K**   👎 **914** (2.5:1 ratio of likes to dislikes). Graphical representation of key words from comments below. Note: there were many sarcastic, negative remarks about the steak the two characters were eating.

Don't Stare

Released: 3 June 2017 (USA)

Awards:

Winner - Audience Choice Narrative – VHSL Film Festival, 2017

Winner - Best Cinematography – Clifton Film Fest, 2017

Official Selection - Virginia Film Festival, 2017

Official Selection - Skyline Indie Film Fest, 2017

Box office: unknown

Budget: US$100 (estimated by IMDb).

Cost breakdown: a character is seen driving to a **house** in his **car**. A **high definition camera**, along with **controlled lighting** was used to shoot the footage. An **old television in good shape** is used as a prop. There is a total of **2 characters** in the film. **3 people** played a major role in production; the director, another filmmaker who helped out with post-production, and a designer who made the YouTube thumbnail and posters.

Filming: December 26 to 29, 2016 (SparksProductions on YouTube) in Fairfax County, Virginia, USA

Reviews (YouTube): 👍 5.1K 👎 1.1K (4.6:1 ratio of likes to dislikes). Graphical representation of key words from comments below.
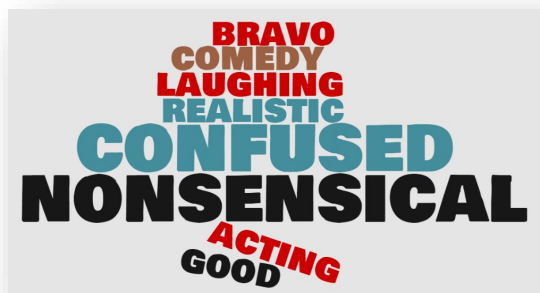
APPENDIX

DESK RESEARCH - NOTES

Name: Salt
Horror subgenre: supernatural
Length: 2:00

Location	Appearance/characters	Tools	Miscellaneous
Creepy house A small, cluttered two-storied (as shown) house – gives the sense that characters are confined and possibly not well off. The bed is small and cheap-looking, and there is not much light (although this also conforms to the conventions of the horror genre).	**Woman and (girl) child** Wearing plain, simple clothes. The girl is wearing a mask for (assumed) oxygen/medicine delivery, as she is sick. Both characters are female, and this is used to highlight their submissiveness and helplessness in the face of the male demon that chases them.	**Oxygen mask, medicine pills** Shows the girl is sick and heavily reliant on medicine to live. **Crucifixes** Mythological significance intrinsic to the style of many horror films. **Old car, messy house** Creates a sense of hurriedness (house) and economic status (poor).	• Warm colours → cool palette • Canted angles • Quick and deliberate motion from camera • Very immersive, non-diegetic sound • Supernatural foley

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
What is the monster? What happens when mother and daughter are cornered in the car?	Mostly between the monster and the mother. The girl is a passenger.	**Equilibrium:** Girl is safe, but unwell **Disequilibrium:** Salt is the only thing that keeps them safe from a monster A ghostlike character starts chasing the mother **New equilibrium:** Mother runs away, tries to get away from monster with child. Sense of an ending, because the rain washes away the protective salt

Name: The Moonlight Man
Horror subgenre: supernatural
Length: 2:42

Notes
• On the street at night • Closeups • Low key lighting • Dark, cold palette • Backlit, silhouettes – doesn't show the monster until the end • Man → monster • Woman → victim • Ends on a cliff-hanger, allows for audience to anticipate what comes next

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
What happens to the woman? Where does the monster take her? Who is the monster?	Between the woman (victim) and monster (victimizer).	**Equilibrium:** walking down a street at night, nervous as usual (representation – the *woman* is nervous) **Disequilibrium:** the monster (showing up, scaring the woman) **New equilibrium:** the woman is kidnapped

➔ Note: *Unities* by Aristotle
   o ONE location
   o NO time shifts
   o ONE key event

Name: Freakshow
Horror subgenre: psychological

Length: 6:46
Note: IB film

Notes
• Closeups • Low key lighting • Glitches • Match cuts (quick) • Jump cuts

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
What is happening to the boy? What is he thinking? Which timeline are we in?	A boy and his alter ego? Or his girlfriend (breaking up)?	**Equilibrium:** having dinner with date **Disequilibrium:** breakup, girlfriend commits suicide, going insane? **New equilibrium:** boy commits suicide too, experiences 'death'

Name: 2AM: The Smiling Man
Horror subgenre: supernatural? Ghost/zombie
Length: 4:08

Notes
• One-point lighting • Dark palette • Handheld shots + steady • Diegetic sounds • Minimal nondiegetic • Closeups • Man is the victim

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
Who is following the man? What happens to him once he is caught? Why is he being followed?	Between man and stalker.	1. Walking (home?) at night 2. Creepy man emerges, follows, chases 3. Creepy man catches up – ends on cliff-hanger

Name: Bedfellows
Horror subgenre: natural horror
Length: 2:31

Notes
• Very cool palette / hue • Diegetic sound only (except near end) • Match cuts • Overhead lighting (+ two-point) • Woman is victim

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
Who is in the bed with the woman?	Not clearly shown until the end, where is it between the woman and monster.	1. Sleeping with husband 2. Phone from husband 3. Who is in the bed with her? Monster jumps out at her – does she die?

Name: Ouroboros
Horror subgenre: supernatural, possession
Length: 4:18

Notes
• Match cuts • Jump cuts • Diegetic sound • Nondiegetic score

•	Smooth movements
•	Some handheld shots
•	Blood, creakiness, night-time (iconography)
•	Swearing
•	Man is victim – becomes zombie

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
Who took the man away? What happened to him?	Not entirely clear – something takes him away, but all we hear is noise from the creature.	1. Sleeping (not even shown, implied) 2. Knocking on door, checks, is locked out 3. Dies? Becomes zombie? His doppelganger answers the door from inside!

Name: Laptop
Horror subgenre: natural, found footage
Length: 3:35

Notes
• Green hue → blue
• Diegetic sound
• Nondiegetic sound comes in
• 1 angle, no movements, no cuts
• Teenage girl is victim
• Diegetic lighting

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
What is causing strange things to happen? What happens to the girl?	Only shown near end, when girl is kidnapped by a man in a mask.	1. Turns on laptop, working 2. Strange things happen (lights go off, things fall, noise) 3. Man in a mask shows up, makes girl unconscious, ties her up

Name: Larry
Horror subgenre: supernatural
Length: 5:20

Notes
• Night-time, well-lit inside guard's post
• One person (man, victim)
• ND + D sound
• Simple, layered score
• High angles
• Supernatural Foley
• Smooth movements
• Match cuts

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
Who is the monster? What happens to the man?	Between guard (man) and a strange monster	1. Night-time guard on duty 2. Finds an iPad, reads a story describing a monster, then the monster shows up everywhere + makes lights flicker 3. Monster comes out from iPad.

Name: Whisper
Horror subgenre: supernatural, natural
Length: 2:00

Notes
• Blue, dark, cold palette
• Use of Alexa (automated, monotone voice)
• ND + D sound + creepy Foley
• Doors open, whisper noises

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
What is happening? Who is the monster? What happens to the girl?	Between teenage girl and invisible monster using Alexa to talk	1. Girl is sleeping 2. Alexa wakes up, starts delivering messages. Doors creak open. 3. Hands grab hold of the girl.

Name: One Please

Horror subgenre: supernatural, graphic

Length: 5:41

Notes
• Bright, daytime • Closeups • Young girl • Very little dialogue • Blood, knife (iconography)

Enigma	Binary opposition	Narrative
What does the girl want? Who is the ice-cream man?	Not clear – more of a gruesome tale of a girl asking for a woman's fingers so she can go 'buy' and ice cream.	Interesting because of the *lack* of a concrete narrative. 1. Girl skipping on the road. Ice cream truck drives up 2. Goes to woman, asks her for her finger. Woman finally gives in 3. Gives finger to ice-cream man and gets ice cream in return

Additional notes

More horror films I watched	Filmmaking conventions I noticed	Analysis of these films - Boscombe's theory of iconography

• Lights Out
• Alexia
• The Black Hole
• Conscience
• Peek A Boo
• I Heard It Too
• Escargore
• La Boca Del León
• Abandoned
• Got'cha
• Ringer
• The Scarecrow's Stare
• Hidden
• Quartier de la Madeleine
• The Tenth Time
	• Characters given some depth
	• Jump scares used sparingly
	• Don't show everything – use sounds instead
	• Don't make it too dark when filming – it'll become too noisy. Instead colour grade in post
	• Twinkle box music used very often
	• Creaky doors
	• Rain, thunder and lightning
	• Slow motion at a high frame rate
	• Blood
		• Locations:
		  ○ Dark
		  ○ Old
		  ○ Isolated
		  ○ Dilapidated
		• Characters:
		  ○ Young girls
		  ○ Innocent, faceless
		  ○ Scared: focus on eyes
		  ○ Monsters and beasts
		• Tools:
		  ○ **Weapons** such as knives, chainsaws, claws, saws, other sharp objects
		  ○ **Gore** like blood, guts, body parts, bloodshot eyes
		  ○ **Clothing** such as masks, facial concealment, white dresses
		• Other/miscellaneous:
		  ○ Low key hard lighting
		  ○ Dark palette
		  ○ Red and black
		  ○ Bold/scribble/serif fonts
		  ○ Shadows and drips

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