Final Major Project 2024 Evaluation

This project had a unique start as I was originally planning for this idea to be created as a passion project separate from the college. As concerns arose before the start of the Final Major Project, I decided to make some alterations to make it logistically achievable within the time limits proposed for the FMP. This, as well as making the most of the college's available equipment and the help of people in the college (such as tutor advice or help from classmates/other students), would prove to be immensely helpful in increasing my productivity on the project as well as lightening the workload during several stages.

The original concept was generated as a duo between me and a good friend currently attending East London University in an acting course. Both of us wished to push and test ourselves and thought to try curating an idea that would allow us to fully delve into unexplored areas within our respective fields. Creating an idea from scratch would not only ensure that we would be more successful in accomplishing this goal, but also gave me an opportunity to share more of the creative control of a project with other people – an aspect that I had yet to fully delve into previously, often resorting to providing control to people for specific segments yet ensuring that I'm able to get the project finished within the time limit – even if that includes taking over.

Initial work on the project was slow, with a core theme and style being developed early on and the rest of the concept to be changed as time progressed. The leading role was hand-picked to be both a challenge for the actor, but also something they would enjoy. I wished to attempt new techniques and explore different storytelling methods and themes to test myself and grow as a director. An example of where I wished to test myself was directing and deciding when/how to utilise focal range. I have found several opportunities in the past to play around with focus and the many ways it can add to a scene/shot - with the extremes of altering the camera's focal range only being made easily understood recently. As I was anticipating this to be a passion project without any guarantees for helpers, I also performed heavier personal research into a variety of other roles such as producing, sound, directing photography, cinematography, and lighting. This would prove to be invaluable once the project came into the domain of college deadlines.

Over a few months since I started working on the general story layout with this external actor, the story specifics and characters had changed numerous times. I would often go onto online calls with this actor during the weeks and spend hours going through what progress I've made and where we think changes could be beneficial/necessary. It wasn't until I had completed a very rough outline of the story and how the characters play into/react to the events that unfold, that we reached a stage where we were happy

with the overall direction. As it was reaching this stage, I started working on a script, directing-related shot list, and some other, smaller documents (such as a list of potential props, character specifics such as personality and clothing, rough schedule for myself, and two forms relating to the story itself and the order of events – mainly related to escalation and progression).

Once the shot list and script were roughly half-way completed and other projects were finishing, I was provided with more free time to dedicate to this project. I went out of my way to pitch this concept I had been working on to multiple people within the class who I'd worked with previously. Over the past two years, I've worked with almost every person within the class and countless people outside of it. This has given me a good understanding of the role preferences and skill sets of each classmate, making the initial group formation period much smoother. After a few weeks, the Final Major Project had officially started, and groups were being finalised. I continued to make slight changes and progress the starting elements of the pre-production, whilst our group prepared to start working on their own tasks.

We started our group with a producer, an editor, a director of photography, a cinematographer, and myself acting as the director – with sound and lighting being taken on by the cinematographer and director of photography. The role of director of photography would end up being contested heavily by two of the five members of the group, with a final decision being made to make one the DoP over the other as one of them had not yet caught up with their other assignments (leading to them not being officially able to start the FMP process). Around this time, the editor and producer also made last minute decisions to leave the group as they wanted to create different projects – one within a separate group which was telling a romance story they preferred, as they weren't a fan of the darker tone, and the other so they could work on their own solo project within a unique piece of editing software. With one of the three remaining members being unable to start working on the project, they would also end up leaving the group to work as this role in another group. Overall, I believe that I made the right decision in choosing who I did for that role as the other person has only recently caught up with their other assignments and I wouldn't be at the stage I'm at now otherwise. In an attempt to help them catch up on their overdue work whilst still having something achievable to work on with us, I came up with a few roles for this person such as creating a making-of/behind-the-scenes video for the project. They have been incredibly stressed trying to juggle all the added responsibilities from joining this other group, though I have helped them with multiple filming days in order to help lighten the load, which they've been thankful for.

The unexpected and sudden loss of the other 2 members from our group, especially after the official start of the FMP, led to some major complications that would affect the project moving forward. As everyone else had already formed their own groups and

ideas, I was now left with the smallest group size I had worked within so far. This meant that I needed to reallocate roles and responsibilities to try and make the workload achievable. I would end up taking on the vital role of the producer (a role which I find to be incredibly important for any successful product, yet also immensely stressful and busy), creating a rough schedule outline for what we need to have completed and by what point.

As work began on creating rationale documents, pitch presentations for our idea, and proposals, I also continued to tinker away at the script and shot list over this period. The date for the pitch came near and we were left without much of a presentation to show for it. I created around 16 slides on top of what little we had and organised with the other group member which slides they oversaw. The original plan was for them to take the lead in creating the PowerPoint, upon their own request, though I had to take on the responsibility as time began running out. In the end, I used AI image generation in order to provide royalty and copyright free backgrounds to each slide that were thematically consistent and relevant to the content of each slide. I would also end up writing for and adding images to most of the slides. Our pitch presentation was commended for clearly explaining the general idea, why we have faith in our abilities, as well as answering any potential questions the class/tutors could have. My only complaint was to do with our delivery, as we didn't have much time to practice delivering the pitch due to its rushed creation. In future, I'd like to work on the pitch alongside our pre-productive work when working with a smaller group, which would save us time and worked well in previous projects. I stumbled on my words slightly during an early slide, which led me to get stuck in my own head for the duration of the presentation. I believe I can fix this problem in future by finding and taking more opportunities to present ideas to people, bolstering my confidence and public speaking skill.

With their desired role of Director of Photography including the expectation of creating a shot list, I was surprised to find that they instead decided to take the shot list I was working on (which was being catered toward reminding me of the directing techniques I wished to use in each shot/scene) and add small pieces of text underneath each shot regarding the equipment we'd need. I've learned now that I should have spoken out about this if it was of any concern to me as it was later revealed that they were struggling with a lack of motivation to perform work during this time. Throughout the project, I gained more and more accumulated stress and, in the end, frustration came through within the group as the team were not fulfilling their roles and showed no desire to complete any works within the time frames agreed. This then impacted on filming days which were set in stone as actors were travelling up from London and only had certain days available due to their university course. In addition, camera equipment had to be booked out on these days, so preparation work needed to be completed on time. We all sat down to discuss things in order to move forward, where it was then revealed to me that as they had received an unconditional offer from one of their

university choices, they didn't feel the need to really try too much. Though I've been told my feelings were justified, I believe it's important to think on how this outcome could have been avoided altogether.

As the time passed, I finalised a schedule for when we should be done with pre-production, production, and post-production, as well as us having delivered our pitch in front of the class. As we were one of the longer presentations being delivered, I'd like to also work on synthesising the information we're presenting a little more and adding more visually interesting elements for the audience – as I worry that some people definitely felt the length of the PowerPoint. I feel like I have come a long way in providing a better layout for slides and adding visual elements that are thematically consistent during this project and my time at college – though I admit there is still a lot more to learn about.

Leading up to the Easter break, I had to finalise organising the actors that we'd be using. I used my good friend within East London University as a correspondent for scouting actors and ensuring they were made aware of their role and what it would entail. Considering that we planned to have chase sequences and murders, I found it immensely important to ensure actor comfort before and during filming. I sent over their sections from the script and then messaged them to make sure we had a plan in place for transport and timings. I would be picking them up from a train station after they arrived from London, before taking them to my house to get fully briefed for the day, get any drinks, food, equipment prepped and packed, and then start the filming process near my house before moving to any secondary locations.

I also ensured that equipment was booked as soon as possible as my experience during last year's FMP showed me that there are countless students all wanting this same equipment around the same time. Due to our plans to start filming sooner than most groups, as well as my early booking of said equipment, we were able to guarantee that it was able to be taken out in our name during the needed days – even being allowed to keep it all for longer than usually allowed due to our pre-production and equipment booking schedule being in place. This, alongside being provided a battery charger for the camera, allowed us to avoid any unnecessary trips back and forth from the college to sign things out again or recharge any items. There were even a couple of times whilst filming where we left the camera on accidentally and lost too much power, forcing us to take an impromptu break to provide the battery a boost for the rest of the shoot. I plan to keep a closer eye on the battery power of any camera in future projects to prevent this unnecessary waste of time.

We also used this period as a good opportunity to search for and scout out any potential locations for the project. We came up with the idea of using an area we'd filmed in previously, though from a different angle to avoid visibly reusing locations. We already had experience within this area, as well as knowing roughly how safe the area

was and what would await us there in terms of shot content. I'd made sure to scout it out again beforehand in case anything had changed since we used it, such as any damages to the area that would lower the safety of the cast, crew, and equipment. Our other choice for locations was to use quieter, public sections of forest owned under the National Trust. In my research form, I go over my time spent researching legality for choosing locations to film and found that this place was not only good for non-commercial filming, but also for what we were looking for. Before using it, we also wanted to scout the area there out as well. This was incredibly helpful for finding parking spaces and quieter filming locations – except that you'll find in my problem-solving section that we didn't think to consider the time of year when filming there. We also had an opportunity to speak with one of the rangers in charge of keeping an eye on the forests regarding the rules of education-based filming around the estate – prompting us to avoid parking the car near any walkways as their only advice.

I made sure the first two days of our 5-day-shoot were focusing on the scenes that only required our main leading role. This allowed us to get used to working with them and develop a flow as a team when filming the project. I believe this made things easier whilst incorporating more actors during the later filming dates. The first day was entirely localised within my house, with it being a rather busy day of filming in order to get all those shots recorded if possible. We managed to do so, though it was made harder when I was told last minute that our Director of Photography and cameraman had to leave early. An issue this left me with when editing as that I wasn't able to correctly adjust the camera's ISO and light-related settings during certain nighttime scenes. This left the image with a heavy grain effect whilst also being very dark. I was under the impression that if it was easily readable off the screen on the camera, it would transfer over to Premiere Pro – which was incorrect. Moving forward I plan to look into the lighting settings on the camera more and ensure that if I attempt shots like this in the future, that I check the light meter on the screen instead. I managed to adjust the brightness and smoothness of the video as much as possible, though not enough to fully counter the effects of this error.

The second day had us travelling to where we had filmed our previous FMP during the first year of the course. Exasperatingly, I would end up losing my camera operator/director of photography again due to them leaving part-way through the filming day once more . We started the day by filming a burial scene in a section of land nearby to my house, which ended up taking much more time and being more difficult than anticipated due to the toughness of the land. In the end, we had to simplify the plan of how wide an area we wanted to dig – as well as the plan to disturb the ground in order to create the look of multiple graves. This was due to the newly added time pressures from taking such a long time on this scene – which motivates me to ensure that we have the right equipment and check out the ground before attempting scenes like this in the future.

We also managed to film the flashback sequence at the edge of the wooded section nearby. This scene provided some of the strongest examples of our choice to alter the focal range and focal point of a given shot out of the whole project. Overall, I believe that we used the technique to good effect in a variety of shots, where we'd place less of a shot in focus or even none of it within focus in order to represent the mentality of the character. In some places, however, I believe we may have used the effect too intensely or too often – which I will be finding out once I gather more peer feedback and reviews. One example of this concern is potentially during the ending scenes of the project when our lead is strangling the survivor, and then afterwards when they fall to sit against the tree instead. In the scenes I purposefully asked to remove as much focus as possible, though I may have done so too much and in too many shots as some people initially viewing this as a mistake. Whether their opinion of the technique changes upon watching the full project or not will be found out later.

After the burial and flashback scenes, the DoP/camera operator left, and I had to travel to the next filming location and record the grave scenes with only myself and the actor. This placed a bit more of a pressure on myself to take on more roles at once, though I am happy with how the shots turned out. My biggest concern is that these added responsibilities took away from the focus I could place on directing and led to some more awkward/inconsistencies regarding the character and their performance. To counter this in later projects, I'll place more of an emphasis on ensuring that the crew will be available – though in this case, it was a last-minute decision to leave which was also aided by their lessened motivation at the time.

The 3rd day was spent once again at my house and didn't include any filming. I used it as an opportunity to provide the main actor with rest for the upcoming and intensive filming days ahead, as well as a chance to check over some of the footage and test some editing effects that I'd been looking into during my research. Sadly, I placed too much confidence in the playback that's available on the camera and allowed my overconfidence in this element to prevent me from noticing some audio and visual issues. I've mentioned the biggest visual issue regarding lighting and film grain in the problem-solving section, which went unnoticed until after the 5-day filming spell and only became apparent once the actor was back in London and wouldn't be available for a while – which made reshoots in general very difficult if not impossible (general shots such as those that only included hands or the car and didn't feature any actor were able to be reshot using stand-ins). I did also find shots with the opposite problem whilst editing later on, where the shot was too bright. As far as I can gather, these are also mistakes made by any and all people operating cameras at some point or another during this project, and can be countered by utilising the same techniques and looking at the light meter on the monitor. Alongside this, I also didn't notice some audio issues that related to peaking whilst the microphone was too close to a subject with a high input level having been set, as well as the effects of heavy wind on some shots. Dubbing

was also as difficult of an option to attempt due to the busyness of our actors, which could have been countered by using people within the college instead, so I attempted in the editing process to fix up and work with the audio I had to my best ability. My choice for using actors from outside the college was to work on my ability to work with new faces and different kinds of personalities, whilst also working with people who are within a more professional area of media studies. This would include placing and tweaking with the parameters of audio-fixing effects, as well as placing ambience/music over a scene and/or combining different takes into one shot. Some places weren't able to be fixed up as well as others, such as a sudden wind spike during the burial scene, though I am happy with the results of almost all others. Peaking audio was something I could do very little to counter, which led me to lower the audio gain on said recordings and determine if the damage that peaking had done was too drastic and would require removal or not.

In future works, I'd like to dedicate more of that day to checking over as much as possible of our footage and audio so that we can ensure that errors like this aren't present.

When filming over the next 2 and final shooting days, we started around my house area before driving down to our chosen filming spots around Ashridge. During the final day of filming, there were issues with train strikes and closures, which I'd managed to pre-empt due to us having looked at the train schedules and news beforehand. By reviewing the available trains and their stops, we found a different station our actor could be dropped off at that was only a short distance from the original pickup site. Organising this ended up taking up a larger chunk of the day than expected and added more pressure to the filming, though I'm glad we were able to resolve this issue otherwise we'd have to book out a separate filming date in the future and try to organise/schedule our cast and crew again.

One of my largest concerns with filming in the National Trust area, was the general terrain. We wanted to record a chase sequence for the project in this area, which we'd taken into consideration whilst scouting the area, though I was still concerned about the safety of filming it all practically. I performed extensive checking along any routes that I'd thought would work for the chase, even managing to avoid an area where glass bottles had been broken, and made sure that it was safe (that I would be happy to run through this segment) as well as that the actors were then briefed and travelled these paths at their own pace before we started recording. This may have taken more time, and in future I'd like someone to take on this role with me to speed the process up and provide a second opinion, but I feel it helped ease the nerves of everyone on set.

During the start of both these days was when the filming of car scenes took place. Due to a lack of communication from the DoP/cinematographer and their related lateness, I made the decision to begin filming these car scenes myself during both days. This was

majorly stressful and complicated, taking much longer than originally planned, though we did manage to record all necessary scenes. To improve our efficiency and the continuity of these kinds of scenes in future car shots, I don't believe there is anything more I could have done. I had checked with the crew the day beforehand as well as organising a schedule for them in advance – with them still turning up two-to-three hours late. Clear communication was present during this period, showing me that sometimes there can be issues that are outside of your control – highlighting the importance of more control/back-up plans in future.

As the rest of the group arrived, we moved to the forest area for the remainder of each actor's scenes. Due to the fluctuating levels of direct sunlight, we had some moments where scenes weren't lit consistently or were too bright and blown out. In the editing process, I experimented with the colour grading and brightness settings I'd been taught by our tutors and managed to fix a few scenes, with others still having noticeable elements. There is little I can do to counter these scenes due to actor and equipment unavailability (as both were in high demand during this period), leaving a few oddly lit shots (such as during the exercises in the beginning). I'd dedicated a lot of time to the colour editing process of my post-production, fixing as much of the consistency problem as possible and even using curves to highlight specific colours such as with flowers, or to dull colours that were too bright such as with the red on my car. I even played around with the filters and contrast in order to improve visual consistency, visual style/enjoyment, and even do the opposite and dull the colours during the scene showcasing the burnt house to make it feel colder and harsher. My largest issue during the colour grading process was that I have a form of colour blindness – mainly effecting my perception of red and green which also happens to make up two thirds of the lumetri colour of video footage. To counter this, I would check specific scenes and shots with those around me and at home at regular intervals in order to make changes that work with them. In about half of the cases, I would be able to fix the visuals to a scene and make them more cinematic with minimal input, though there were scenes that looked good to others but bad to me and vice versa. This made checking with others invaluable for a visually pleasing video for most people and definitely a process I'll continue to use in all future editing ventures.

During the above scenes, we also experimented with our framing, more so than during the starting scenes. Whilst using the rule of 3's as a guide, I wanted to work with the DoP to find other ways that we could generate unique and visually interesting shots. This led to a lot of experimentation on the day, which was only made available by having our extensive pre-production and shot lists prepared – prompting us to go through these scenes in a mostly chronological way and try new things out whenever we were ahead of schedule by a good margin. The effectiveness of our unique framing choices has varied so far depending on the views of the different people we've shown the edit to, though the overall opinion seems to be mostly positive.

The final major issue we'd faced during filming at Ashridge was the parking, as we had to film during busier days due to the availability of our actors from London. This ended up causing us to film over the Easter Holiday itself and caused the main parking area to be entirely filled and busy. The crowded areas also fed into some of the potential filming areas that we'd scouted, prompting us to move further away from the populated areas and towards the edges of the National Trust-owned forests. We were aware that this would be an issue, but as we had prepared replacement locations within Ashridge for filming, we were able to work around it.

After these filming days, I took a couple days off in order to prioritise my physical and mental wellbeing. This was something I'd learned and wish to continue practicing regarding finding a good balance as I'd experienced burn out in previous projects. The period leading up to and during production was incredibly stressful and often required thinking on our feet to produce solutions. After that period, I began to work on the evaluation and edit for the project, with the edit taking most of my focus leading up to its completion.

During the editing process, I dedicated several hours into gathering and testing foley and music. I wanted everything I used to be royalty free as it's good practice to improve the chances of anything I make being accepted into film festivals – as this is a great opportunity to gather feedback from more people and network with industry professionals. Alongside searching for music and sounds, I wanted to gather audio that would add a sense of suspense and an uncomfortable nature to the project – further adding to our planned themes and catering to our intended audience with more staples of the psychological thriller genre. After a lot of searching, I found a good ambience for the countryside/forest locations that we filmed at that also included the sound of a fly near the microphone. During the editing process, I checked with my peers and my family and found that it added to their sense of unease – prompting me to add more examples of this fly noise during specific scenes and keep the audio relatively unedited. Alongside this ambience, I also gathered sound effects/background noise and came across a relatively unknown Spanish sound that consisted of a drip-like noise that built up in intensity. I was concerned regarding how distracting or how well this audio would fit, though feedback seems to be overwhelmingly positive regarding its inclusion – providing a unique and rarely heard build-up that's indicative of a leaking tap which feels uncomfortable.

One thing that helped me during the editing process was that it was my first time working with audio that was combined with the footage. During filming, we'd used an attachment that allowed to plug our microphone directly into the camera. This would overlay our audio directly onto the clip and make the syncing of dialogue and sounds much less time consuming. Sadly, our lack of experience in recording audio this way led to some complications regarding peaking of audio and lessened audio quality based

on conditions such as weather and proximity. We practiced as we filmed and experimented with the equipment around this time in order to figure out how to change the input level without access to a Tascam, which I would have liked to do earlier. In future I'd like to put aside time for equipment tests whenever we plan to use tools that we have less experience with, though we were unable to do so during this project as the filming date was booked earlier and there wasn't the time available. To try and counter this, I worked on changing audio levels by experimenting with the audio gain, altering and playing with effects such as a de-noise feature, combining sections of audio from multiple takes, as well as applying layered effects to create a muffled sound (such as after our lead lets the survivor escape near the end). In some cases, the audio had peaked or was filled with too much noise – which led me to try and work around or remove these scenes. The biggest example is when I could find no work around other than manually changing the audio gain for individual parts of the clip where our lead apologises to the grave, which some heavy wind sound being heard when he speaks. The changes to audio level removed most of the wind from the scene, though I could find no way to fix that issue other than if I were able to dub the line over. I plan to discuss this scene with my tutors over the coming days and see if there's a fix I missed, but I will use these new audio techniques I'd taught myself during any future projects I work on – with peers complimenting my audio work as one of the best parts of this project.

The final thing I have to add about the editing is the choice to add harsh cuts. This combined with the sometimes-long scene duration (which was primarily used to place us into the boredom felt by our lead) creates some odd pacing choices for the sake of immersion. I personally find that these techniques work better in some areas than others, and that I might have gone too far in some areas, but feedback from others will be paramount for deciding my approach moving forward.

During the latter half of the Final Major Project period, I also attempted to juggle my own work with that of helping other students. In some cases, I was suggested to help specific students from other classes by my tutors, though one would end up only needing me to be the camera operator for a single day with another not being able to film at all. I do enjoy helping others, however, as it provides me with great opportunities to work with other people, perform different roles, and practice different techniques within unique project ideas/types. I believe that finding the right balance between myself and others will only serve to benefit my own well-being and consequently boost how much I can gain from these experiences, plus the quality and desired help for others. Whilst I want to help others and learn as much as possible, I need to learn my own limitations and not to overstretch myself. Exceeding my limitations, I have now learnt to manage my time, help other people, but still ensure that everything I put in is positive for myself and those that I help.

Overall, I'm personally very mixed on the project. I wasn't able to dedicate anywhere near as much time to directing as I would have liked, leading to a project where I mainly focused on learning other roles. There are parts that I enjoy, and parts that I didn't – with a few areas that could have been improved with better equipment (such as a higher-quality camera and better stabilisers/rigs for more complicated camera movements). The consensus from my peers is generally positive and it's collectively believed to be a step up professionally from the works that preceded it. It was a very stressful and busy journey, but I do feel overall a net positive toward it and proud that it was completed in the state it is considering some of the challenges we'd faced. I hope to take everything I've learned during the last two years and this project to produce even better products during my time at university over the next few years.

Problem solving:

Pre-emptive:

Weather – One concern we have regarding filming is that of the weather. During a previous project, we'd had some major delays as we juggled a low availability rate for our actors with a rather bad period for the weather. Due to the stress and disruptions this ended up causing, I'd like to plan ahead for this aspect more during this project – by dedicating more time to creating an efficient schedule and ensuring that we have days put aside just in case, our chances of successfully filming all of our outdoor shots increases drastically. Another method we can employ is to check online weather forecasts regularly and bear this in mind when comparing it to our plans. An effective schedule will allow us to complete scenes in less time, and also provide a better understanding of how our project can/must proceed in order to be filmed to the level we aspire to.

SD cards and storage – One underrated issue that can affect any project is regarding technical difficulties. This will commonly end up taking the form of an issue in relation to SD cards and/or general file troubles. By bringing our own cameras alongside booking out college-owned cameras, we should be able to avoid any major issues if one camera stops working or breaks – as we'll have others that we can rely on for that day's shoot before we attempt to fix any issues. SD cards can have a multitude of issues occur on the day of filming, and like cameras, if there's no backup plan then filming on that day is all but guaranteed to be halted.

Issues regarding SD cards that can occur include the card getting full, needing to be formatted to continue being used, or any number of rarer, but ultimately still possible, difficulties. The easiest way to counter this is to ensure that we have spares with us at all times – especially when filming away from the college or my house (which would prevent us from either troubleshooting the card or providing a new one if not brought with us). I have experienced issues with SD cards beforehand during multiple projects, and often find myself saved by always carrying all of the cards I own on me at all times. I will continue to do this in future due to how helpful it has been, and also brief the other members of my group on how useful this tactic can be during any project.

Camera batteries – As we plan to film a large amount of this project away from college grounds, we need to plan ahead regarding powering our equipment. In preparation for these concerns, I spoke with our in-college technician and managed to book out one of the charging docks for the camera's battery alongside the equipment. By ensuring that I keep the battery charged during breaks and between filming days, this issue should be easily preventable. A camera running out of power part way through a filming day would force us to stop for the day without this in mind, as well as having the charging dock on-hand preventing unnecessary travel back and forth from the college. C100 batteries also come with a button for getting a rough estimate on how much power is left on the battery, which will help us keep an eye on our usage and know when to take a charging break. The light panels will not be having a charging dock provided, meaning that using them outdoors is a risky manoeuvre as the battery life can be very short. They do come with a plug that can provide power directly from any outlet, which means that we can use it for the more important, indoor scenes.

Booking of equipment – Due to the nature of the Final Major Project period at the college, a large number of students are all planning to book out filming equipment around the same time. This creates a large demand for the items that I would also like to use, applying additional time constraints and strictness for returning what's been booked out. As I experienced this during the FMP period in the previous year at the college, I have booked out the equipment and discussed our plans with the tutors and technician in advance and plan to film during the beginning of the Easter Break. Though this is also a period prompted by the availability of our actors from London, I had already wanted to get started on the filming process as early as possible – so that we could perform any reshoots with much less pressure later, if needed. This will add to our pressures for finishing necessary pre-production, though this should be countered considering the head start we gained in this aspect by starting earlier.

Filming car scenes with GoPro – Not only are we hoping to film scenes we've got little experience in, scenes involving cars and their interiors, but we also plan to record these scenes using unfamiliar equipment. To combat our lack of experience, I have plans to perform test shoots with this new equipment as soon as possible. We've had some

opportunities to film car scenes during previous projects, and usually find ourselves underwhelmed by the result. In response, we've planned to perform much more extensive research on methods and purposes for these kinds of scenes – which we can then practice during our testing days using the GoPro.

Cousin loss - Leading into the start of the Final Major Project, as well as taking place in the middle of the project that came before, I received some painful news. After an unexpected car crash, one of my cousins was spending exactly a week in hospital in a comatose state before losing his life in the hospital. The sudden nature of this event shook me deeply and caused me to need to take some time to look after myself and my family. This would also end up eating into my allotted time for the project, so I've started and plan to continue finding ways to effectively juggle self-care and work on the project to avoid falling behind or struggling more later. Effective scheduling may be the solution to these concerns.

Group size sudden decrease – During the early weeks of the FMP project, an initial group was being formed alongside a base concept. We'd had to change our idea from one person's idea to another due to the original person still having outstanding work to be completed before being allowed to commence work on the final major project. This led to a reorganisation of role delegation, which would subsequently lead to 2 people wanting to take on the role of director of photography. Due to the outstanding work, we brainstormed and came up with the idea to have one person take on said role for the short film, with the other taking on the role for a behind-the-scenes documentary/documentation video – allowing them a chance to catch up as they wouldn't have as much pre-production work to complete. In the end, they decided to work with a different group as their DoP, allowing them to catch up on previous works and still get credited for their chosen role in a new product. Alongside this, we had our original producer leave the group due to a personal reason around the same time. This cut our group down by half during the early formation stage, leaving just myself and the chosen DoP.

In an attempt to counter these difficulties, I plan to take the lessons I've learned from my time in these roles whilst helping other groups, as well as what I've learned from having worked with these people on previous projects, to do my best to emulate their specific talents and accomplish their tasks to the best of my ability. During a few projects that took place earlier in my college experience, I had to assist or take on others' roles in order to meet the time constraints – providing me with further experience in those responsibilities. It's given me an opportunity to place more research into those roles, though I will need to put aside more time to ensure that I can accomplish all these tasks within the expected time frame. During filming days, I plan to use any available help from people in the class in order to make the filming smoother, though I will also be working on countermeasures and backup plans in the

event that they are unavailable on the day. Originally, I was planning to make this project entirely by myself and one other person, an actor from East London University, allowing me to already have a head start on my plans for schedule-keeping and efficient filming days when working with a small crew. It will be a unique challenge, though one that I do look forward to facing. I am also aware that it is impossible for me to act as a replacement for a talented and invested crew, leaving me slightly disappointed with the turn of events.

Filming with people situated in London – As we are set to film with actors from East London University, extra pressures have been added to the project regarding transportation and scheduling. This decision has added more people's availabilities to consider when picking filming dates, as well as requiring a chunk out of each relevant filming day for the purpose of transporting to and from filming locations. I've been working on a schedule with the cast and crew that should mitigate these concerns, though initial drafts show that I will have a limited number of days that must take place rather early into the FMP timeline. Parts of these concerns are combatted by the earlier start that was taken regarding pre-production paperwork, with efficient scheduling and planning being required for the rest. I believe strongly that using these actors is the correct decision, and hope to use everything I've learned over my two years at the college bolstering that choice.

During production/post-production:

Train closures regarding actor transport – An unexpected issue arose early in the production phase for the project, where strikes and closures were being held regarding specific trains across England. One of the trains affected was, sadly, a train that we had to use for transporting actors over from London to somewhere I could more easily pick them up. There was nothing we could do regarding this, however with pre-planning we were able to organize transport through a different route. The downside to this was losing over two hours in the filming day, which was unavoidable. Planning ahead helped us immensely, as without these measures in place – filming would have been cancelled for this day.

Weather/lighting changes – Despite our research into the potential weather over our filming period, we still encountered periods of unexpected weather conditions. This always led to us having to think of a solution in that moment – such as taking shelter for a moment when a short burst of rain occurred or waiting for clouds to move past/over the sun for visual consistency. Though these conditions are very hard to predict, I believe that discussing counters in advance could have saved us some time.

Farm location: space and noise – Whilst filming at my house for the early scenes of the project, I hadn't considered the uses of performing an official recce beforehand. In

the end, noise pollution from the farm situated next door provided us with times where we had to wait it out and time our shots – as well as needing to be careful of showcasing the farm through any of the windows due to continuity reasons. The biggest concern, however, was regarding the small size of the house's interior. This created a lot of complications during filming as even just fitting our small crew, cast, and equipment would fill most rooms up to the point of major inconvenience. This led me to have to think on my feet during the first filming day at this location, moving cameras and people around whenever needed so that we could record the scenes required. I'm not sure yet if this will have any major effect on the quality of these shots, though in future I would like to ensure I check over every filming location regardless of time spent there. Viewing a space with a filming mindset is entirely different from memory.

Crew availability – There were a few issues regarding the communication and availability of people within or outside the group regarding filming. This led me to have to make informed decisions on whether I began filming alone or wait, depending on potential arrival times and the schedule for the day. I chose to bring these concerns up to the group after filming was completed and gained an apology as well as an explanation for their unreliability. Creating this opportunity for understanding and clear communication earlier could have prevented the issue during the final days of filming, which I can test out if something similar happens in the future. I would need to allot more time in each day's schedule for dealing with any unexpected issues to accommodate this.

One-ear audio – Luckily, this issue came with a simple fix, as Premiere Pro allows you to easily use their effects to duplicate the audio from one ear into both. Double checking the settings on any audio-recording equipment in future can prevent this concern and save editing time.

Large file size – This issue requires us only to plan ahead for when we are present at the college, as the total file size for editing our project is very large. This means that if we plan to edit whilst in a lesson, we need to ensure that files are being installed from OneDrive or from an external drive as soon as possible. Another solution is to save editing for when I'm at home and work on other tasks whilst at college.

Lighting difference between camera screen and actual file – One unique obstacle I faced during this project is an instance of inconsistency regarding the camera's built-in monitor. Whilst recording a scene in low light, I always checked with the monitor to ensure that the content of the scene is clear enough to be understood – yet, when the footage was put into Premiere Pro, I found that it was almost impossible to decipher. I now know to place less trust into the monitor and instead ensure that the other ways the camera measures light intake suggest the shot will work (such as looking at the light meter on the monitor).

Unable to book equipment again/high demand – Sadly, we are unable to perform any form of reshoots for this project due to the intensely high demand for equipment from the start of our editing process and right up to the hand-in date. There were a couple of shots I would like to have reshot due to lighting issues, but now find myself unable to. I feel I was right to organise the equipment and filming earlier to book it out for that longer period and get ahead of the demand, though this is an unfortunate result of that. I am seeing how much I can alter lighting using techniques taught to me by my tutors.

Colour grading, brightness, and film grain - Relating to the lighting difficulties mentioned above, this has the effect of generating a strong amount of film grain over some shots. There is little chance that I can remove it altogether, though I will look into ways of countering it as much as possible. I will also aim to remove this issue altogether during future projects. Another issue I'm facing with the editing process is my personal struggle with colour perception. As I have a form of colour blindness that mainly relates to red and green (2 of 3 colours used during the principles of colour grading), but not enough for them to appear grey, I end up gambling on making a shot look better for everyone or just me. To counter this issue, I've been checking how my colour grading is looking with people around me whilst in class and making changes where necessary.

Busyness of locations – One issue we experienced with the filming schedule is that we had no choice but to film during busy dates, such as Easter Sunday, due to the availability of the actors. This added to traffic on the way to filming locations, the difficulty of finding available parking, as well as much more people being present around the forests we planned to film in. This made some parts of the area that we'd scouted for filming no longer plausible for use, though we luckily had plenty of areas to choose from.