

Unit 12 Evaluation

For the 12th unit, we were tasked as a class with choosing a filmmaker of our choice and studying the life, achievements, and impact of said professional in the world of media. Alongside this, we were expected to produce a visual element such as a short film to accompany it. Groups were formed on the day that the unit was established, with a maximum of 4 members. For my personal research, I chose to study the life and accomplishments of Stanley Kubrick – not only due to my personal enjoyment of his works and character, but also due to the massive historical effect he's had on the modern film landscape (as well as how he's been referenced or referred to by countless other amazing directors).

The limit on group size would end up being a slight hindrance as we'd have to rely on some help from others in the class - in order to get enough people both in front of and behind the camera.

For the visual element, the group was very happy to work on a short film. The biggest issue we'd have to face with this, however, was the very short period we'd have to record it. This was due to a combination of elements, such as a recommended schedule and numerous other projects that I had to work on around the same time. Alongside this, we also all had to agree on a filmmaker to emulate as our initial plans to blend different styles together was suggested against. Attempting to merge multiple different styles would likely end up overcomplicating the filming process and leaving us with a messy final product.

In the end, we decided as a group to emulate the style of Stanley Kubrick. To do this, I wanted to try and replicate the shot types and techniques used during the famous "Here's Johnny" sequence from *The Shining*. The first step in this process was analysing the original clip. I watched it several times and analysed the content of each cut, from the length of time between each cut, the colouration, general camera movements and positions, as well as the content/purpose of each shot. After doing this and then running through it with the group, we moved on to getting props. Due to the short period of time available and the lack of any budget, we had to make some changes to the props used in the film vs what we would end up using – such as using a prop axe from the Marvel film franchise instead of a fireman's axe. The next difficulty we faced was how we'd recreate the famous breaking of the door. After discussing this with our tutor, we decided to test out the effectiveness of the prop axe against a cardboard box. Luckily, the axe was more than sturdy enough to break the box and we decided to utilise cardboard as a way to effectively break through the "door".

As we booked out equipment and a location in the less-busy upstairs classroom area, we ran into the issue of how we'd prop the cardboard up. By this point, we'd torn up a box into the rough shape of a doorway and separated some spare cardboard for recreating a window and having some spare left over. Due to how much cardboard was available, we'd only have one attempt to break the "door" down or we would have to try and source more materials or scrap the scene entirely. In the end, I noticed a natural hole in the doorframe from the type of wood used to create it. Upon seeing this, I created a hole in the cardboard that was roughly the same size and used a pen to jam through both holes at a slight angle and prop the cardboard up. We considered using tape but decided against it due to potential damage to the surrounding walls. As we filmed the door-breaking scene, there were natural mistakes made, such as the hole we'd used to prop it up breaking open mid-shot and falling or just a general flub of either the camera or action. To counter this, I had to carefully direct the movements and actions of the actor breaking the door, as well as organise newly opened holes and even at one point flipping the cardboard upside down to start fresh from the other side.

In order to get the scene-ending final shot with the lead's head in the broken door, we had to work between shots to guide the breaking of the cardboard into a hole shape – with enough room for the person's head to fit into it. Overall, I am happy with how the door breaking scenes turned out especially considering the limitations and difficulties.

Moving on to the rest of the scene – we had to film a short couple of shots outdoors. This, naturally, induced the expected troubles of having to organise these shots whilst people were actively walking through or using the space. To combat this, we juggled between a patient approach of looking for good opportunities, as well as a more hands on approach of asking people to kindly wait for a moment as we finished up the shot. Overall, these scenes went smoother than expected, though not without some added complications regarding our own positioning – where we were required to spread out over a larger area due to the wide angle used in a specific shot.

The remaining scenes involved our secondary actor, and their interaction with a window. Due to obvious health and safety issues, I was fully against the idea of filming these shots while interacting with an actual window frame. Instead, we used a cardboard outline and reenacted the actions using this frame. This required some careful propping of the cardboard between tables as well as having people off-screen securing it and allowing for some specific, slight movements that occur as the character interacts with it. This aspect was another that we had planned out in advance, as the person performing the secondary role has a dream to work in visual effects. My idea was, with their agreement and comfort in doing so, to recreate the scene's specific, snowy location using CGI. Due to the short period of time to work on it, not every part of the scene was able to have the same attention and some elements of their interaction look slightly odd, though I am happy with the outcome – especially considering the majorly decreased safety concerns from using this approach.

Another, entirely unique challenge we faced was that the secondary actor had reportedly (told to us on the day of filming) - never felt fear/terror before. When considering the content of the scene, this immediately spiked some concerns but without time to counter this we had to make do with the best we could manage within our time slot. In future, whenever considering actors for roles, I'd like to confirm with them all the unique emotions and performances they would have to provide and confirm that they are able and comfortable to do so.

During the editing process, I used this as an opportunity to practice more colour correction. I used some colour matching techniques along with alterations of the specific Lumetri colour sliders in order to provide as much of a visual consistency as possible between shots, whilst also employing visual variety between locations. I decided to attempt to test my timing by editing the scene to the exact timings of the original and syncing up the audio at the same time. In future, I would like to practice directing with specific methods of timekeeping for the contents of a given shot when recreating a scene in such a way as this one – as the syncing process was made much more complicated without this. In the end, I had to make alterations to the speed and frame processing to sync up as much of the audio to the video as possible without creating too much of a notable, visual mess. I'm happy with the edit but if the specifics for my editing method were considered earlier on, then it would've made for a much smoother process.

In the end, I'm surprisingly happy with the result – especially when bearing in mind the budgetary and time constraints. The act of recreating the shots and timing from *The Shining* has given an even greater appreciation for Stanley Kubrick's filmmaking – deciding now that every shot of his is either absurdly special or deceptively complex, even when it would appear simple. The way each shot is timed, framed and moved is always calculated and has motivated me to put in as much thought as he does into my future works (whenever time allows for it).

The second part of this unit was to create a written report or PowerPoint presentation on our chosen filmmaker. After dipping my toes into what there was to learn about Stanley Kubrick, I very quickly made the decision to go with an illustrative report to capture as much information as possible. Over a period of several weeks, I would watch documentaries, read articles, seek out online interviews, speak to people I know, etc regarding as much as I possibly could find about Kubrick and his filmmaking. I wanted multiple sources from the beginning in order to minimise the risk of including false or incorrect information, and also found it to be a fascinating chance to study Kubrick's career from multiple perspectives – especially when considering the decisiveness of his techniques and end products among critics and the public.

I learned a lot from the research and writing stages of this report, from both the unique entry he'd had into the world of directing, to his approach of adaptation for books/events to screen, and then his general mindset and approach to problem solving and how this would impact his creative output. I'd always been a fan of Stanley Kubrick, but now I am able to appreciate more of his story and more of his unique perspective than I was ever able to before. In gathering imagery to accompany my report, I also had the opportunity to learn about how marketing of films has evolved and changed over the years, as well as the general content of films, their levels of appreciation among audiences (mainly regarding specific contents) and how that's also changed. I decided that these topics began to stray too far from the original point of the report, needlessly extending it without answering to its initial purpose, and so decided to omit them from the final product. Watching his films with my family and talking extensively about them also provided fascinating opportunities – allowing me to compare mindsets and appreciation between his works and others from around that time to now.

I've learned a lot from doing this project, both about the life, achievements and mindset of my favourite director, but also about the specific techniques he'd employ whilst filming. It's given me an opportunity to experience new difficulties regarding media, as well as new ways to view the pre and postproduction from various other periods of the filmmaking process.