

Reflection

It is May 10th, 2021 and I am sitting down in front of my computer thinking about what to write about for one and half pages. The assignment details are vague, and it only specifies that the reflection needs to be longer than the conclusion section on my poster. Since I finished, I can't help but feel sentimental about the path I took to get here.

The year was 2013. I was fourteen years old. It was the second week of my freshman year of high school. My school benefited from the tax dollars of being located in an expensive neighborhood in Long Island. Because of this, the school had televisions mounted in every single classroom and hallway. This allowed the school to visually broadcast morning announcements. Students would sit at a desk and read the day's announcements off of a teleprompter. All this would happen in front of a green screen which displayed a static image of a school. There was a bug in the top right corner and rolling text at the bottom of the screen. It wasn't very high concept but it was professional. These morning broadcasts were done by the school's TV Studio Department.

I had actually met the teacher in charge of the department the week before in my Design and Drawing class. His name was Mr. Brogan. You couldn't mistake him for any other teacher. He had a ponytail that went down to his waist and dressed in the kind of suit you would see on someone at a high end art gallery. He was the one who suggested that I join TV Studio Club during the second week of school to "feel it out." Needless to say, I absolutely loved it. At the club I would work on club commercials for morning announcements and get assigned school sports games to film. It was also here that I met Hannah, my friend and actress who would be the star of my culmination film. After my freshman year, I would go on to enroll in every single one of the TV Studio classes. In those classes, Mr. Brogan encouraged me to find my voice while I worked on short film projects that would teach me the basics of filmmaking. And many of those projects had Hannah as the lead. I ended up taking TV Studio until my senior year. I also ended up working my way up in the club so much that I became its President.

When I was deciding on which college to attend, my parents expressed their concerns about my career goals. They made it clear I couldn't go to a film school to get an art degree and they suggested that I go into computer science instead. So I searched around and found City Tech's Entertainment Technology Program where I could pursue what I wanted to pursue while earning an engineering degree. This was a compromise that my parents could agree with. So in a sense Entertainment Technology was the only way I could pursue film. It was also around this time that I had contacted professor Terao for the first time. I had expressed my interest in the program and sent him some of my high school projects. After my acceptance into City Tech, I met the other star of my film, Nicholas, during my first semester here. Coincidentally enough this was in a Design and Drawing similar to the one that had introduced me to Mr. Brogan, three years before. We became fast friends and like Hannah, Nick appeared in almost all of my projects. For the next few years, I would go onto learn about all the facets of the filmmaking process with great detail. And throughout this time Professor Terao served as a mentor. I believe he appreciated my drive to learn and my honesty with gauging the quality of my work.

In late 2019, it came time to think about what my culmination was going to be. I knew that I wanted to make a film. I didn't know what the film would be about yet but I knew from the very start I wanted to have Hannah involved. At the same time, I was getting interested in the cyberpunk genre. I loved the aesthetics of cassette-futurism and cyber-noir. Inspired by films like

The Guest and *The Terminator*. The initial draft of *Fetch* was just a chase film. I had originally envisioned it being about a girl who makes rounds delivering unmarked packages at night while being pursued by an unfeeling killer. I wanted to have the cyberpunk aesthetic in the film but I did not want to give any context to what the packages were or to who the characters were as people. Initially I wanted the plot to be interpreted by the viewer.

I didn't change the idea of the story until lockdown had begun in March 2020. By then I was more well versed in the cyberpunk genre and I had noticed themes that were prevalent in the genre. One of these themes was dystopian society. This is seen most clearly in *Blade Runner* and *Blade Runner: 2049*. Another prevalent theme in cyberpunk was mega corporations. Seeing everyone ordering from Amazon (a real life equivalent to a fictional mega corporation) inspired me to make the looming menace of the film a similar business. As I heard about the lengths people were going to, to try to pay rent, it occurred to me that the person chasing the girl shouldn't be a flat robotic person. They needed to be more nuanced. That was where the idea of fleshing out the fixers came to me. Peggy should be a fixer trying to make ends meet, but Linus should also be a fixer and not some assassin. Linus should be a dark reflection of Peggy as a reminder of what can happen if you're caught by the megacorporation. I expanded on this to eventually get to the final script.

I had already talked about everything afterwards numerous times this semester. The processes of pre-production, production, and post-production. But in the time after the completion of the project, I've been feeling a bit empty in all honesty. I'm graduating again but it feels different from high school. When I was leaving high school it felt like there was still a set of instructions I could neatly follow and end up safe and successful. But at the end of this I am thinking about how there are no instructions for the future. So this is the point where I would connect the dots not my own. I have the obvious plans such as smoothing out the rough edges of my film with some reshoots and further editing. And I have a possible job lined up at ABC digitizing their news footage. And I want to make more projects before applying to Master's programs. But honestly I feel like I just want to take a break for a few weeks before getting into any of that. These eight classes I took this semester have taken their toll on me and I feel like I want to get some R&R before actually moving onto my career. This program has helped me so much in terms of knowing what the industry is going to expect out of me. And I feel like this culmination project really has been a "culmination" of all my four years of hard work. I feel like my future is full of great opportunities and I can't wait to get to them.