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My culmination project consisted of creating a video essay about the tv show Law & Order: SVU. I created a thorough planning process with a Gantt chart & table. I made sure my editing ideas and inspirations were properly seen and shown through my notes. My inspiration for this culmination was to do a video essay of the same quality as the video essays that YouTubers “Nerdstalgic” and “Every Frame a Painting” do. I wanted my video essay to include the same quality of amazing and eye-catching edits, the entertaining dialogue, and the subtle music that enhances the video instead of distracting viewers.

I was just flipping channels on tv and they were giving SVU. The episode playing had Ice-T as the main character. And my first thought watching it was “ Why the hell is Ice-T playing a cop?”. But then I kept watching and then I started binge-watching the whole series. I liked the interesting and complicated storylines and their informativeness. It taught me a lot about topics I didn’t even think about. I liked the characters, some were good, some were complex, but they showed their faults always. They showed evil and corrupt people in various forms brought to justice. The concept of showing how the justice system operates but also showing what it can become or should be, helping all types of victims despite their backgrounds was nice to see. It was like an “escape from reality with reality”.

Now the reason I chose to do my project as a video essay was because video essays were something I got really invested in watching during the pandemic. They’re often less than 10 minutes and they discuss varying topics about tv shows, movies, music, paintings, characters, etc. I thought I could do it because I’ve been writing essays since middle school, so I saw that as a helpful skill for the project, and one of my concentrations is video so I know how to edit.

This project was the first big project that I’ve done for myself that I was able to put my all into and dedicate myself to it. Although I had big expectations of how I wanted this video to turn out, it didn’t go exactly how I planned. As a beginner editor and new to using Premiere Pro, the editing software I chose to use for my main edits, I wasn’t knowledgeable about how to achieve what I wanted to do. There are only so many Premiere Pro tutorials and Youtube videos that can teach you, but I believe that it was enough to get me to the finish line. I found that Premiere Pro is an easier editing software to use than Avid Media Composer, if I hadn’t decided to use Avid, I would have struggled much more throughout this process. I believe that more time in class should be taken to show how to use Premiere Pro to students since Premiere Pro is more the software used by freelancers.

Some scheduling challenges that I faced and didn’t expect during this project was working on my script. My script was an ever-evolving script that I had to do constant rewrites. It included moving or deleting whole paragraphs or sentences to make sure that they sounded correct in voice recordings and during editing. There were parts in the script where I found that it was too wordy and wasn’t engaging enough as a listener or it didn’t connect with the visuals I wanted. The voice recordings were also something I didn’t expect to have to redo constantly.

Any new changes to the script had to be recorded, and any voice recordings that didn't sound right due to my stuttering or any background noises had to be re-recorded. The voice recording and script issues, it resulted in delays in my editing where I had to make sure that was handled before going into details of the arrangement. Or having to look for specific episode scenes that were difficult to find on youtube and needed to be searched on Hulu and recorded on my phone.

So the concept of an edit I had was a clip would play for a couple of seconds with its audio, it would then pause, and then a VCR effect would take place with static noise, and a pause symbol would be shown. The logo of the tv show would pop up to go along with the audio and then fast-forward into the next clip. My 1st try was nowhere near close. The 2nd try was somewhat closer, I was able to do the effect or an imitation of it, but it took me a couple of weeks to figure out and multiple tutorials were watched. That was the case for the majority of my edits, I didn't know how to execute it or the final product wasn't exactly how I imagined.

The technical issues that I faced while editing was very present. I wanted specific edits to look exactly how I saw in a video but I faced the issue of trying to replicate it. For example, one edit that I wanted to do, I called the "Hulk edit". I called it the hulk edit because it was a specific scene from the Hulk 2003 movie where multiple videos of different pov of the scene came in to create 4 boxes. This edit was very difficult for me to do technically; the videos I had chosen to use had a long duration of audio so I had to wait for it to end for the next video to come in which also had audio. The edit didn't come out exactly right in which the keyframes I added, I struggled a lot with. The videos come in too slow or they'll come in at a normal pace but pauses along the way constantly.