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Reflective Journal

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Lucky ones is the name of the film that was decided to be made for the final major project. Wanting to attempt to make a film that can show a kind of immense pressure that isn't always noticed but is constantly felt, especially in today's era.

This topic meant a lot to me, society's expectations, social pressure and the stereotyping that happens everyday isn't just at the extremes anymore. It felt like making a movie explaining how things can pile up in your mind, would be a good thing, and that it's okay if a person needs a break or time to themselves.

This I felt was majorly experienced in the first lockdown within England in 2020, many relationships were struggling due to not being able to have time apart, people who live alone and are unable to meet people, have to struggle with their own thoughts. Overall it was a horrible experience for many, and for others it was a lovely experience, however overall it was full of ups and downs. Although people expect and assume that everything is perfect, you will meet the one you love, live a happy life, get married and have kids, that isn't always the option or choice for some. That picture perfect fairy tale is full of insecurities, stress and pressure from others, and as someone who experiences that on a daily basis, I felt it would be good to try and capture that.

Although people may not understand mental health and may not feel pressured by anything, there are plenty who do, which is why I feel this is an important discussion to discuss, especially since the global pandemic, and this is because it might give input to people who have loved ones and friends who feel this and experience this, an opportunity to understand them a little more, and maybe even show how to and how not to deal with it. An example of this is; in the script Olivia's boyfriend and parents pressure her to get married, against her wishes he buys a ring. When Olivia finds this it causes her to stress and go into a type of panic, in this case he did not respect her wishes and her need for time. However in the script when she meets Regan, the friend, they express the fact that they both feel things that can't easily be expressed or shown, which you wouldn't expect. However people keep things hidden and it's only normal to feel this way.

This movie went through many changes before getting to the final storyline, so let's discuss the original idea;

The original idea was fairly similar as to how the end product ended up, though there were minor changes such as; Locations, characters and script.

Original idea

Let's start with Locations; For the movie it was originally planned for the film to be based in Southend-on-sea, Essex. With a few different locations such as Devon, this location was picked due to the paved streets, hills and pretty beaches. The feeling of heading to a new area and getting some fresh air was needed, Devon worked quite well in terms of how the scene was to be set up, and having that different area vibe was what was needed.

Moving onto characters; in the original script there were a total of seven characters, consisting of; two parents, a child, main protagonist, the boyfriend, the friend and the fish shop worker. In the end the amount of characters was cut down due to reasons which will be discussed later in the reflective journal.

Which takes us onto the next part, the script. In the original script, there was a completely different ending compared to the current ending. There was some debate as to how far the topic of social expectations and pressure could be pushed, however in the first version of the script it was decided that instead of the pressure of settling down, it would have the topic of LGBTQA+, having the main protagonist, although loving her boyfriend, not wanting to commit, because she wasn't in love with him, because she was hiding her true self, due to the fact she may disappoint her family. This is still a big thing in society, which is why it felt it would be interesting to dive across that. In the end it was decided that this idea would not go through, due to the fact being it was not recommended to have so many of society's expectations in one film. Having too many messages for the audience to try and comprehend can be overwhelming and often the original message gets lost, hence why this decision was not made.

Although the original idea wasn't bad there was some feedback on the matter, mainly consisting around the LGBTQA+ idea, about how it would be interesting to have the male partner be part of the LGBTQA+ community, or even have our main protagonist, question her sexuality, but then go back to the male lead. Personally it felt like this wasn't the best way to go about it, the first being if the male lead became gay it would take the story from the main protagonist, and the society message would be lost. The other reason being is I wanted the film to, like mentioned before, not to have an overwhelming amount of messages in the film.

The Script

Throughout the months of pre-production there were many changes to the script, the first one would be the characters' names. The characters names were constantly changed though the name; an example of this would be the main character, who is currently known as Olivia, the main protagonist name went through changes such as Kirstie, Liv, Olivia and Chloe. None of the names fit, and feedback was received that the names were not suited to the character, in the end Olivia was decided as the name, this was also handy due to the fact the name could be shortened to Liv as a nickname, in which the male lead refers to Olivia like this when talking in the kitchen scene.

When the final version of the script was completed, it was decided that another version of the script should be made to make filming in a global pandemic less dangerous. This was decided when Tier 4 was released and England went into a national lockdown.

The Covid19 script was a condensed version compared to the original final script product. This was due to the guidelines that were to be followed. So let's discuss how it was condensed.

The locations in the movie were cut down by a fair bit, in the original script we had a total of 9 locations, these consisted of; House1, House2, House3, Car, Shop, Chipshop, Park, Beach and Devon. In the Covid edition of the script this was broken down to limit the amount of travelling and mixing of households that was to be done. An example of this would be the house locations, in the original script there was a total of three different houses that were to be filmed in, consisting of; Olivia's House, Olivia's Parents house and the student house. This was condensed into one house, and you may be thinking how? Well, due to not wanting to mix too many/ if any households, it was decided that Olivia talking with her parents would be cut from the script, and so it made it easier to use the main parts of the house. The house itself has 4 bedrooms, two lounges, one bathroom as well as a kitchen. Cutting this into scenes; The tutoring will be done in one of the bedrooms, Olivia finding the ring will also be in one of the bedrooms. Apart from those scenes the kitchen and lounge will be used within the house. As this will majorly limit the mixing of households, it was decided for this to be the safest way.

Locations

The locations had to be thought over many times, as mentioned in the 'Script' part of the reflection journal, there were many locations that needed to be discussed and changed. Another version of this is Devon, in Devon it was planned that the beaches and the

hillside would be used for not only scenic purposes but also to gather the feel of a different area like previously mentioned. However as part of the Covid script it was cut due to the government guidelines explaining your not being allowed to travel. This means that the feeling of escapism had to be met in a different way. Taking the beach into account, obviously as traveling is not an option, it is impossible to film, so it was decided to use Leigh-on-sea beach. The area around also has paved paths similar to Devon and gives off a different feeling. However taking into account that more people are going out to exercise and on walks due to being locked in, beaches may be busy due to them being scenic and takeaways being open. It was decided at this moment that there will be back up locations consisting of Southend-on-sea beach, Thorpe Bay beach and Shoeburyness beach.

Editing

Onto the editing side of things, looking at Rope (1948) movie, i really enjoyed the use of transitions to try and create a seamless shot. But why would I choose this for just a short movie?

Sometimes when you are caught up in your own head, you forget to do the simple things, you lose track of time and even forget what time or day it is. I feel using this shot would be good, whereas a day or a week, you see it mentioned if time has passed, or it shows the audience the day by day, that's not what i want for this transition. I feel this way of editing would be good as it can help understand the character more. If these transitions are used, it can be hard to follow what day it is, and I find that interesting. Is this the same day? Or has it been over a week? Especially using this transition where it shows different times of day could also be interesting.

The reason for the use of colours is due to what people feel when they seen colours, an example of this is yellow; when people see yellow, they think "happy", "sun". However looking at the colour black; people think "dark", "misery". I want to use this in my film, which is why when the character feels sad or stressed the colours of the film will be dimmed/ faded out. However when the character is thinking or experiencing something happy, the colours in the film will become more vibrant.

When shooting the test footage of the car scene, one important thing came to mind, which was the fact of there were too many shots of the car. Footage was taken from 8 different angles of the same thing. Looking at this test footage which is included in my EPK, shows best which angles to use and where i can cut down on time and storage space on the SD care when it comes to filming for the final thing.

When editing the final test shots as well as the presentation, the videos keep being out of sync, working fine on my pc and not on others. I ended up re- downloading and re-uploading about four times.

My View

Honestly looking at the situation, there are many things that have had to change and be adapted, however as the saying goes “After the storm, comes a rainbow”, i took this into account and realised there are some more positives. One example with the cut down on travelling and needing help, this cuts down a lot on budgeting. An example of this would be, for filming in Devon, petrol would need to be paid for, and if something were to happen, lodging may have also needed to be sorted. As well as the added cost of meals and face masks/ hand sanitizer to keep those on set safe.

Though working on this film and gathering secondary research, it was interesting to learn how many people have experienced the kind of emotions and feelings that the film tried to get across. It was also interesting to see how many were either students of university, college and small business workers/ owners. Which was the demographic and psychographic the short film was after in terms of target audience.

Personally this has put a new view into my eyes outside of filmmaking, as you really do not understand how people are feeling, so it would be best to go easy and give people time. The movies portray feelings easily as easy to read, as the audience themselves need to understand the character to be able to gain a sense of understanding and in some cases relation. I feel it will be interesting in the future to cover more topics like this, and to see how and why it gages the audience’s attention. Will this be able to shed light onto how people feel? Will it be informative? Can it help at all?.