

“Haunting Punishment”

by

Bianca Berbick

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First Reader: Alfredo Garciapardo

Second Reader: Lenka Pichlíková

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Bianca Berbick

Senior Project

Artistic Aim:

My Senior Project is an original solo performance titled “Haunting Punishment”. I portray the character Nora Mitchell who receives an unsettling visit from a former friend and classmate named Kira Johnson who is now escaped from a mental institution. I have modeled my senior project in the form of an eighteen-minute horror short. What would start with my character Nora being woken from sleep by a phone call from another friend with the conversation getting heated and intense. The phone call ends with a mysterious bang at the door and what ensues for the rest of the short is a scary cat and mouse game of stalking between Nora and Kira ending in Nora's fate.

Short films are not the easiest to do. They need to be short and sweet to the point, to get the message to the audience. I believe short films give opportunities for filmmakers to go beyond limitations and take risks without needing a large budget. I believe short films can be a great indicator of what we as human beings are exploring and feeling no matter where we are around the globe. This format is an exceptional way for upcoming filmmakers to practice, find their style, and brush up on their skills. When writing the script for “Haunting Punishment” I desired to keep the plot simple. The concept of “show don’t tell” came majorly into play here as well. I did not want the short film to be so dialogue heavy. I wanted to show the situation of the plot and my emotions through my actions, rather than have my character Nora say everything she does or feels. Numerous films of have scenes of characters reciting too much exposition. In the opening

scene, there is a conversation that goes on with the character Nora, however it does not drag out for too long. Brief information is given on Nora's family and friends. In addition, brief information on the Kira Johnson character to give her character some background, despite the audience barely seeing the character and her never speaking throughout the entirety of the short. When the character Nora hears the bang at the door, that signifies the turning point of the short film turning into a suspenseful cat and mouse stalking game. From here to the end of the short film is where the music cues and camera angles come into play to help string along the story.

What do I personally hope to accomplish with this project? This a passion project as I have been a massive horror fan since I was a young child whether it be a slasher, a haunted house flick, occult horror, rural horror, etc. I will mostly be taking inspiration from many classic horror films such of the 1970's and 1980's. And by inspiration, I do not mean story elements but artistic and technical elements. The 1970's and 1980's horror are where it peaked in my opinion. I want to give my artistic flair on the style of those horror films from those time eras. In addition, I want to make use of music cues. I feel like what is missing from modern horror films are great musical scores. I want this project in a way to be a to tribute the horror films of the past. I view this video project as if this were my own low budget home movie. Many of these old school horror directors began their filmmaking as children using super 8 cameras to create their own short movies right in their backyard or neighborhood.

What artistic challenges do I personally hope to conquer? With this being my first on camera-based project, I desired to keep this project simple. Nothing too over the top. Simplicity is something missing from modern films. Not everything needs to be show and tell. Leave it up to the watchers' imagination. With the Kira Johnson character I do not want to show her too

her too much, particularly up-close face wise. I want to keep that visual of her face to an end reveal. Even with keeping things simple, I too want to incorporate some camera techniques and take advantage of my time with this camera which will be used for an extended period. For example, early slashers such as *Black Christmas* (1974) and *Halloween* (1978) made brilliant use of the first-person camera shots. I want to use that in my project to put the audience in the shoes of both Nora and Kira. For Nora, when she is rushing around the house in panic mode and how much stress she is in that moment of panic. For Kira, I want the audience to feel the sense of dread when Kira is lurking behind walls and peeking out of doorways. Experimenting with angles is another desire. I want to explore dutch angles, high, and low angles. As said in the accomplishments section, I want the character of Kira to be shown as little as possible. For her first weapon wielding scene, written in the script is Kira raising her hammer and hitting Nora in the head leading her to tumble down the stairs. Instead of showing Kira full body frame, a high angle is cut of just the hammer being raised in the air. Zoom in and reactions shots are also a plus. And basically, this where editing comes into play. This whole filming process could be straight forward with basic camera work, but that would be boring. And now with modern editing programs I could give some extra flair to make my video project unique. As I see it, the ending sequence departs from color to black and white with slow motion acceleration to demonstrate the ending of the short is nearing. Loud jump scares in modern horror films are not of my gratification, however one would be accepted as a tribute nod. I plan to incorporate a rapid run across the screen, however with a touch of accelerated motion. And music, you cannot forget the music. Musical scores were a big part of classic horror films of past. Everybody knows the theme music to *Halloween* (1978), *Friday the 13th* (1980), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Jaws* (1975),

*The Omen* (1976), *Psycho* (1960) and many others. I want to incorporate musical cues for scenes to give it that extra effect on what type of trauma is going on in the scene. Would *Halloween* (1978) be half as memorable with that iconic score by John Carpenter? How boring would the shark scenes in *Jaws* (1975) be without that famous theme music? A great musical score could set the mood for a scene and make it pop and be more memorable.

How might this project be an important step towards my post-Purchase goals and plans? I desire to be an actress. That is where I see my future. Now in modern time, to be successful you need to spread your wings and branch out in other areas. Many actors and actresses start out as actors but branch out to other sides of the entertainment business. Some branch off into singing, voice acting, directing, producing, talent agents, clothing lines, make-up lines and many other things. In this case, I am not only acting in this project, but I am also directing behind the camera and writing the script. Acting may be my aspiration now, but in the long run I may fatigue of acting and desire to become a director or a screenwriter. Even if I do not quit acting, I could pursue directing and script writing as a side gig. I believe working with a camera can be a great experience on what it is like working behind the camera.

Why do this project here and now? I want to achieve this project to display that if one has something that they are passionate about, you can put your mind to it and showcase it to the world. Performing something different is okay. I realized my project would be different from most of the other senior projects and I endorsed it. I achieved to perform something offbeat and not what is expected. Too many films play it safe now. Hollywood writers have become too fearful to write new material. Hollywood producers are too hesitant to authorize projects that are not too common. I want to show that taking risks, is something artists can make more use of.

I certified it would be risky writing, directing, and acting in this project by myself with lack experience, but I conceived sometimes artist need to challenge themselves to gain experience and knowledge. When coming up with the script, I had the mindset of if I were watching a short what would the subject matter be about? Why perform a project on a topic that does not interest myself or something that does not define my viewing interest?

What impact could this production have for the audience and community? That one could put on a production anywhere they desire to. Work with what you got to accomplish what you want. The only indoor space I had access to film this project was my residence. I utilized every space of my residence that was accessible. Additionally, this is my first experience not only with on camera acting, but as a director using film equipment. The thought of using film equipment on my own for this duration of filming my project led to insecurity and confidence fear. However, with guidance on how to use the equipment, and capturing experience using the equipment I knew I could make it work. I want to show people that taking risks can pay off in the end. I need people to see it is okay to show your passion for the things you like, full out in display. I want to show with minimal experience you can get a project done and done well.

Bianca Berbick

Senior Project

Research Essay:

We have all seen a least one or two horror movies in our lifetime. I have viewed numerous myself over the years. The one job a horror movie must do is scare audiences. Who doesn't thrill the fun on seeing a horror movie on opening night to a big crowd screaming and cheering away with giant buckets of popcorn in their laps. The great horror legend writer Stephen King once said, "And the most terrifying question of all may be just how much horror the human mind can stand and still maintain a wakeful, staring, unrelenting sanity." Horror films have been a staple in the movie genre since the beginning of cinema and still reign in popularity today in modern times. They leave us in a variety range of negative emotions such as suspense, fear, terror, disgust, and shock. What is the appeal? Why are we fascinated with films that trigger our fears? Here, we have a movie genre that deliberately moves us out of our comfort zone to fear for our well beings mentally and emotionally.

There are all types of horror films. There is everything from psychological horror, slashers, comedy-horror, torture gore splatter, paranormal, monster flicks, and found footage. Psychological horror deals with more of the mental and emotional side of horror where the characters minds are at stake. Popular films from this sub-genre include *House of Wax* (1953), *Psycho* (1960), *The Shining* (1980) and *Silence of the Lambs* (1991). The most popular of the bunch in my opinion is the slasher which had exploded in popularity in the early 1980s. These horror films usually involving a crazed serial killer in mask going after a group of teens or adults.



The sub-genre has spawned multiple million-dollar iconic franchises from films such as *Halloween* (1978), *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), *Friday the 13th* (1980), *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), *Child's Play* (1988), *Scream* (1996). The comedy-horror are the films where the film wants to make you laugh and scared at the same time. this sub-genre also falls under the categories of the spoof and parody film genre. Popular films from this sub-genre include the *Scary Movie* (2000) and *Shaun of the Dead* (2004). The torture gore splatter involves at a lot of blood and guts. The human body is also taken advantage of with limbs being ripped apart and tortured. Popular films in this sub-genre include *The Evil Dead* (1981) franchise, *Saw* (2004) franchise, *Hostel* (2005). Paranormal films explore the supernatural side of horror. They usually involve ghosts, spirits, entities, and demonic forces. Crucial elements in this sub-genre also involve haunted houses, exorcisms, and body possession. Popular films of this sub-genre include classics such as *House on Haunted Hill* (1959), *The Haunting* (1963), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Carrie* (1976), *The Omen* (1976), *The Amityville Horror* (1979), and modern-day horror franchises such as *Insidious* (2013) and *The Conjuring* (2013). The most tedious of the horror sub-genre found footage is presented in a way that the film is being shown through the lens of somebody else filming a video as we follow characters on camera. Elements involved include more natural acting, shaky camera, commentary heard off camera and a rawer vibe. Popular films of the sub-genre include *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), *Cloverfield* (2008), *Quarantine* (2008), and the *Paranormal Activity* (2009) franchise. The monster movie delves into the science fiction and fantasy side of things. The monsters in these movies involve sea creatures, aliens, vampires, zombies, werewolves. Popular films of this sub-genre included *Frankenstein* (1933), *Dracula* (1931), *The Werewolf* (1956), *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), *Jaws* (1975), *Alien*

(1979), *The Thing* (1982), *The Fly* (1986).

Horror films of the past have been the subject of infamous controversy, but that did not stop the genre from thriving and being successful. It is not a horror movie if it is not surrounded in controversy. Many of them past were objectified by angry parents, religious groups, concerned movie reviewers, and much more. One famous horror film subjected to controversy was the 1984 Christmas horror film *Silent Night, Deadly Night* about a killer Santa Claus. Christmas is not a holiday associated with cold blooded murders and violent disorder. The film is just depressing as the story is about a little boy after witnessing his father being shot and his mom raped, then shot goes to live at an orphanage where he is poorly mistreated and abused by the head nun of the orphanage. We then see him shortly after in his teens disturbed and withdrawn with him resorting to go on a murder mayhem dress as Santa Claus. Not exactly a film families would want to view around the happiest most joyful time of the year we gather with our loved ones. *Silent Night, Deadly Night* was not even the first horror film set around Christmas. The film was preceded by *Silent Night, Bloody Night, Christmas Evil and To All a Goodnight* (1980), *The Dorm That Dripped Blood* (1982), and most famously, the 1974 low budget Canadian horror film *Black Christmas*. So why did the parents go crazy over this *Silent Night, Deadly Night*? Article by journalist Jason Bailey titled ‘He Knows When You’ve Been Naughty’: How *Silent Night, Deadly Night* Inflamed a Nation” dives into the chaos surrounding the film. The advertising campaigns and television spots release by the studio TriStar pictures shown Santa Claus wielding an axe, holding a gun, and people screaming for their life. The bigger issue was the time of the day those ads were being aired, during the daytime when young children are watching television. The release of the film was met with angry parents who protested outside

movie theaters, parents calling in radio stations, and a horrible press release campaign for the studio. Popular media outlet *Variety* outright refused to review the film. Famous film critics Roger Ebert and Siskel Ebert credited the film along with (other controversial horror flick *I Spit on Your Grave*) with this quote:

“One of the two most contestable films I’ve ever seen” (Bailey, page 4)

Other real reactions and quotes from the mouths of angry parents here from the article touted:

“Protests flooded Milwaukee radio and TV stations, most from a group calling itself Citizens Against Movie Madness, led by two local mothers.” “Deck the halls with holly, not bodies,” and “Santa’s not a hit man.” Denise Giordano, who organized the Brooklyn protest, told the *New York Daily News*, “The movie violates everything I believe in; it’s taking the spirit out of Christmas.” Bayport, Long Island, resident Dennis Colasunno told the paper he saw the TV commercial with his three young children, and “it scared the hell out of my kids — this commercial has ruined Christmas for my children.” (Bailey, page 4)

Despite all the uproar, controversy and negative reviews from critics, the film was a box office success for the one week it was in theaters recouping its budget. The film was shortly pulled from theaters the following week. The film also somehow managed to spawn four sequels, a remake, and another remake which is set to release next year in 2022.

Popular horror franchise *Child’s Play* was met with controversy with its first and third installments. *Child’s Play* (1988) slightly garnering angry parents who instead of protesting outside movie theaters, protested at the MGM studio headquarters. Employee John Hilton who

worked at the studio confronted the crowd and was able to get them to cooperate after only a matter of minutes. Not as chaotic as *Silent Night, Deadly Night* but unfortunately, the franchise's third installment *Child's Play 3* (1991) got caught in the middle of a murderous crime scene involving children. *Child's Play 3* (1991) already did not help itself by being less successful than the first two installments garnering negative reviews and a poor box office intake, but many accused the film of the murder of two-year-old James Bulger in 1993. Two eleven-year-old boys Robert Thompson and Jon Venables leered Bulger away from a shopping center mall in England where he was accompanied by his mother who was shopping on February 12th, 1993. The poor toddler was found torn apart and left for dead on a railway in Walton, Liverpool, a mere two days after his abduction. Bulger was subjected to over forty-two injuries which included him being beaten with rubbles and bricks, getting stomped on, paint splashed in his eye, batteries shoved in his mouth and (possibly his anus), and getting his skull fractures by a twenty-two-pound iron bar. The last straw was Bulger's body being torn in half by an oncoming train. Thompson and Venables eight days later were charged with a crime of abduction and murder. By Thanksgiving of that year, the two delinquents were found guilty by the court making them some of the youngest murderers in history. Another case pointing fingers at the franchise was the murder of six-teen year old Suzanne Capper. Supposedly, Capper was being injected with amphetamine, while twenty-four-year Bernadette McNeilly uttered in her ear "I'm Chucky, Chucky wants to play." McNeilly was giving a serving of jailtime for life. Partner in crime twenty-six-year-old Jean Powell who also took part in Capper's murder, claimed that Bernadette was the character Chucky and had the seen about the sadistic murderous doll. Director of the original film Tom Holland advocated against these claims stating:

“Viewers of horror movies could only be influenced by their content if they were 'unbalanced to begin with.’” (Nowicka, page 1)

He did agree that it was inappropriate for young children to be viewing films like this. Also adding:

“I can see it giving adolescents nightmares, but I can't imagine why anybody would let an adolescent see a film that scary.” (Nowicka, page 2)

In the same way video games are blamed for school shootings and gun wielding, horror films are sometimes blamed for convicted crimes and murder.

Misogyny has been also a widely discussed topic regarding the horror genre. The horror genre is considered to some as being anti-female or portraying females in a bad light. Most horror films involve females running around in underwear, taking off their clothes exposing their breast, damsel in distress behavior, constant screaming, and male gazing camera shots. Opinion article by journalist Angelina Dequina titled “The misogynistic portrayal of women in horror films” sheds light on horror female characters that are victim to the misogyny. She writes:

"A prime example of this is the character Wendy Torrance (Shelley Duvall) in Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation of “*The Shining*.” Wendy consistently screams because of her husband's descent into madness, but her character development doesn't go much further beyond that.”(Dequina, page 3)

She also informs that famous horror writer Stephen King was completely upset and outraged with the portrayal Wendy Torrance in the film adaptation, compared how he wrote her in his

original novel. He says:

"one of the most misogynistic characters ever put on film."

Its true female characters in horror films are not portrayed the best. But that never bothered me. I say if nudity, sex, and endless screaming bothers you, then the horror genre is not for you. And not all horror movies involve these things, and those can stick to the more classic black and white horror flicks. But then a person will manage to find something else to complain about.

Exploitation films range in the B-movie, low budget territory. Basically, exploitation films go the route of film where they push graphic violent content with gruesome fascination on death, murder, and sexual like themes. There are different types of exploitation films. But the one closest to the horror genre is the rape and revenge films such as Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left* (1972) and *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978). Due to their subject matter revolving around gang rape and torture of women, both films have been banned from certain countries or heavily edited down the more explicit scenes. Films like these end up gaining cult classic status, deeming too repulsive to be enjoyed by the public.

But on the bright side, the horror genre has established and popularize the concept of the final girl. The final girl is usually the female lead heroine that were supposed to root for. The "good girl" who is smart, reserved, laidback, does not do drugs or has sex. The slasher sub-genre is usually associated with this staple trope. The third act of a film usually involves a final showdown between the serial killer and the female protagonist with the female coming out on top, not only a survivor but a hero. Some of the most iconic final girls of the horror genre include Laurie Strode portrayed by Jamie Lee Curtis in *Halloween* (1978), Ellen Ripley portrayed by

Sigourney Weaver in *Alien* (1979), Nancy Thompson portrayed by Heather Langenkamp in *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), Sidney Prescott portrayed by Neve Campbell in *Scream* (1996). So that is positive, right? Here we have a marvelous batch of strong female leads who can hold their own.

Another opinion piece by journalist Grace Pulliam titled: "Opinion: The "Final Girl" horror trope is rooted in misogyny, needs to be examined" takes issue with the concept of the final girl and sees it in a negative light. Noteworthy pieces of information Pulliam states in her article are:

"On the other hand, when a character makes it to the end of the film alive, it indicates some inherent superiority that allowed them to survive. Feeling threatened, horror giants in Hollywood began killing and torturing fictional facsimiles of the liberated woman, depicting her as amoral, inferior, and vapid. They punished her with a painful, sensational death, playing out these scenarios repeatedly on the silver screen." " They created the idealized prototype of the Final Girl and rewarded her obedience, her purity, by sparing her life. As if to say to the women in the audience, "This is your only hope for survival." As if to say, this is how you must behave, or you will die. We'll kill you."

To be fair, Pulliam makes some valid points. If you like to have sex, drink, and party you deserve to die. But if behaving like a saintly angel who is pure kind you deserve to live. But you just cannot win with some people. No matter how you look at things there is always an issue.

Censorship is another major issue with horror genre. Most horror films are either rated PG-13 or R. The more explicit ones get slapped with an NC-17 rating, but those usually have their scenes cut to get the R rating. In the early 1980s, the UK came up with the term Video

Nasties, which referred to a list of horror films that were censored and banned in the UK on home video. Writer Megan Navarro deflects on this from article editorial titled "Breaking Down All 72 Video Nasties" stating:

"Why does any of this matter today? There are certainly parallels to be drawn and lessons to be learned from the initial unregulated video market and the governments' overkill in its attempt to employ regulations. For fans, any film deemed a Video Nasty meant something taboo that must be sought out and worth watching. Anything banned earns instant curiosity." (Navarro, page 3)

Navarro brings up a valid point. If there was something banned from audiences from viewing, would you not want to go out of your way to see the product somehow, somehow? I certainly do that. I seek for unseen footage or resurfaced production stills that ended up on the cutting room floor. What is it that they did not want me to view? One of my more well-liked entries in the *Friday the 13th* franchise *Friday the 13th: The New Blood* (1988) got hit hard by the MPAA. Most of the blood, gore and kills were cut from the final product taking away from the death scenes. I enjoyed the film, but I would have loved it, if the film were not cut down in the editing room by people who are too overly sensitive to these types of films. I am personally against censorship and all art should be seen the way it was created in the first place with, whether positive or negative.

The horror genre receives a bad reputation as being the lowest common denominator of the major movie genres. It is debatable which gets trashed on the most, as the comedy and action genres have their fair share of trashing as well. Most people associate horror films with bad acting, poor characterizations, sex, nudity, misogyny, gore, and violence. And yes, it is true most



horror movies have all that stuff, but isn't that what makes the genre its own thing? Movie cliches are a thing of every film genre, but horror films and cliches go together like milk and cookies. It is not a horror film if somebody trips and falls, the car runs out of gas, characters searching in dark rooms, the couples who have sex are automatically going to die, and a tough one-liner before giving the murderer their demise. These are some of the things that are primary for your typical horror movie. It makes the genre stand out.

All in all, the horror genre like most other film genres either you love it, or you hate it. I have much enjoyment from the genre as well as many others. It is a genre that has been around since the beginning of cinema and it is still going strong in currently in modern time.

Bianca Berbick

Senior Project

Technical Essay:

Senior Project is now complete. It was a long and hard journey, but the project was a success. Overall, it was fun, but particularly challenging and considerably hard work. This solo project was originally supposed to be done on a stage in front of an audience, but the pandemic happened, and things had to change. With the news of online classes for the Spring 2021, a stage presentation of this solo performance was out of the question. Thus, leaving the other option to have this senior project go digital. The thought of filming this project in the format of a short film made at home, sounded exciting, but also nerve wrecking. A whole new experience was coming this way. When one is preparing for a new challenge, optimism and perseverance should be front and center.

Writing and directing this project myself was the main priority. The thought of another person writing and directing this senior project never came across the radar. Many questions were asked during the early process. If there was somebody writing the script? Is there a director involved? Are there any collaborations taking place? Is lighting going to be a problem? And every time the response to these questions was denied with an opposing decline. This project was to be something special and done solo, despite the lack of experience with filming. A risk was taken to challenge myself to see if I could pull this project off solo. The results were a success, as the project turned out remarkably well made.

Regarding film equipment, there were concerns as there was no film equipment at the

spur of the moment. Worries were over, as access to film equipment was granted from the Campus Technology Services department at the college. Equipment was mailed to the residence in no time. Now secured with the equipment the next issue was how to use it. Within opening the equipment, the concern of not being able to handle all this equipment was becoming worrisome. Networking help from the theater department to get some help and advice was the next step. With that being done, I have become accustomed and more confident with the equipment once help was given.

Rehearsal time was much needed to achieve shots and camera angles rightly. Lighting was important as each scene had to be well-lit and properly seen. Viewing the final product, the lighting was done properly as each scene looked crisp and clear. Directing this project on my own, there had to find a way to film myself on camera properly. I was required to be both behind and in front of the camera. For that to be done, the camera was placed in position where I could fully see myself on camera for each scene. Before each scene, I come up to the camera to switch on the record button, film the scene, and then walk back over to the camera to turn off the record button. That is the process used for each scene where I had to be in front of the camera. In the editing room, footage of walking over to the camera to on and off the record button was cut out. Therefore, that needless footage is not included in each scene. Moreover, adjusting the tripod took place for when the camera needed to be raised up or shot from a lower level depending on what position the camera required to be in. The tripod had numerous adjustable heights extending to floor length to eclipsing past height tallness.

The first scene shot in bed was mildly rough. Numerous takes played out, because of self-conscious with on-camera acting. Uncomfortableness in front of the camera was

understandable. The issue was naturalness and believability. My performance came off as if I recite directly off a script. It did not feel authentic. The acting in the final product came off well, however there is still room for improvement. Receiving real experience with on camera acting is the next step. More is known now, what my strengths and weaknesses are as an actress in front of the camera. There is now some understanding as to why some actors and actresses do not watch their own films or television shows. Constructive feedback was received that my acting during this scene was well done and believable. Admirable to hear that the acting was well done from feedback, however there is more room for improvement. On camera courses are to be prioritized in the future.

Viewing the final product, the usage of music was highly effective and enhanced the video. Music cues were mostly used for building suspense. The most effective use of music was for the climax scene leading to Nora's demise. A sample of the ending theme from *Creepshow* (1982) appeared to be the quintessential use. It flawlessly eclipsed the moment of dread and danger commencing on screen. For Kira's grotesque appearance, black eyeliner and six-dollar artificial press on tattoos were purchased to use. The character of Kira came off creepy and unsettling, which was the intention. An inexpensive nurse costume completed the ensemble of this deranged mental patient character. A dime was hardly spent, and the finished costume demonstrated a character presentation that deemed professional and realistic. With this project, low budget proves one does not need a massive budget to bring about a well-made product.

Editing consumed the most time on this project. iMovie was used for editing the video. Here is where creativity and flair could be explored with the music, the picture quality, color, sound effects, and acceleration. Over the top craziness was not to be expected because as said in

the artistic aim, less is more. The decision to end the video with a black and white color departure, made the final scene more dramatic. In addition, I accelerated down the final scene to slow motion for additional climactic effect. One accelerated scene of running took place for one jump scare scene with the Kira character running past the living room. Editing would be the most enjoyable part this project despite the time length it took to complete the process. Experimentation gave a sense of what type of style suits my preferences of directing.

Appreciation for camera crew was taken after completing this project. Actors and actresses receive all the attention, however the workers behind the camera deserve more recognition. It is massive, dedicated work behind the scenes.

What was learned through this process is that one can do anything they put their mind to. With minimal experience of using film equipment intimidation intensified pre filming. However, with some guidance, optimism, and confining in myself, a well-made short film was thoroughly created and crafted. Constructive feedback is always magnificent; however, criticism is how one continues to improve their skills. As said in the artistic aim, my goal is to become an actress first and only. However, after completing this senior project I can now safely say I am open to directing and screenwriting. That was not my priority before senior project. It would be beneficial to hone my skills in all areas in the film and television business. In conclusion, this senior project was an enjoyable hardworking journey. I have hope that I am able to do a project like this again soon.

“Haunting Punishment” Script

Written by

Bianca Berbick

(Scene 1)

(Scene opens with 17-year-old Nora Mitchell sleeping in bed)

NORA

(The ringtone on Nora's phone goes off)

Hello? Oh, hey Melissa. (beat) (Nora sighs) Oh, I was still sleeping. I went to bed late  
last night.

(Nora laughs) Yeah! Check this out! I am going to have the whole place to myself for the  
whole weekend. Just me.

Yes! (beat) My dad had a business trip to attend this weekend. And my mom took my  
little brother to my grandmas for the weekend.

So, I have this whole place to myself. (beat) Listen, I was thinking of inviting you,  
Christine, Valer-- (longer beat) What? (beat) Hear about what? (Nora starts looking confused and  
concerned) WHAT? No, no, no, no, no, no, wait stop! Are you serious? (beat) There's no way.

There is no way in hell. But how can that be!?! (beat) I was with them last night there is  
no way.

(A frantic Nora starts panicking and stressing) Oh my god, I can't breathe. I can't breathe.  
(Nora starts to cry) Are you sure? (beat) Christine and Valerie are dead? (beat) (Nora continues  
to cry) Do they know who it did? (Nora breathes heavily) (Nora starts looking confused)  
Kira Thompson? Yeah... I used to go to school with her. I ditched her for Christine and Valerie  
because she started acting crazy and obsessive and I just told her to fuck off and stay out of my  
life and what the hell does that bitch have to do with what we are talking about!!!! (long beat)  
(Nora starts looking confused and concerned)

(Nora hears a loud bang at the front door and screams out loud and drops her phone. A  
frightened Nora looks out at the doorway for a couple of seconds before she slowly starts  
climbing out of bed to approach the front door)

(Scene 2)

(Dramatic music plays as Nora slowly walks to the bedroom doorway)

(Dutch angle first person point of view shot of the hallway)

(Nora walks down the hallway and peeks at the front door. Nora approaches the front  
door and opens it)

(Cuts to Nora looking outside the front door.)

(First person shot view of Kira peeking from the backside of the fireplace)

(A quick sped up shot of Kira running down the hallway to the bedroom.)

(Nora looks back thinking she heard something. She locks the front door and walks to the peek around the corner of the hallway. Dramatic zoom in shot of little brother's bedroom door)

(First person shot of Nora walking to bedroom door. She takes a quick look into her bedroom. She opens door to her little brother's bedroom gazing around for about 15 seconds)

(Nora approaches blinds at window. She carefully looks out the window.

(Nora gasps)

(Cut to an outside shot of a stone-faced Kira peaking from the side of the garage)

(Scene 3)

(Dramatic music intensifies. Nora runs down the hallway to the kitchen. She approaches the backdoor and opens it)

(First person shot of Nora walking to the side of the garage. She looks behind the garage and nobody is there. Music stops)

(Dramatic zoom in on Nora's brother's bedroom window. Close up shot of a frightened Nora)

(Scene 4)

(Dramatic music starts again as Nora runs back into the house)



(First person point of view as Nora is approaching the deck and the door)

(Music stops. Nora locks the back door and heads to the counter to pick up a knife)

(Scene 5)

(Warbly music begins playing as Nora exits the kitchen with the knife)

(First person shot of the hallway. Nora sees the basement door open.)

(Dutch angle shot of Nora walking down the hallway with knife)

(Nora turns on the hallway light and opens the basement door)

(Nora looks down the dark basement)

NORA

Kira!

(beat)

I know your down there you stupid bitch!

(beat)

Come out you little coward!

(beat)

(Kira peaks out from the upstairs bathroom)

(First person shot of Kira slowly coming out of the bathroom)

(Backshot of Nora holding the knife behind her back at the top of the stairs)

(Quick cut to a shocked Nora)

(Shot of Kira's arm rising as she hits Nora in the head with a hammer)

(Nora falls down the basement stairs screaming)

(Scene 6)

(A hurt Nora lays at the bottom of the stairs and wipes at her bloody nose)

(Nora aches in pain as she slowly gets up)

(Nora starts crawling to closet behind the steps with an injured leg)

(She opens the closet while glancing back behind her)

(She grabs out the closet a crutch and slowly starts to get herself up on to it)

(Nora struggles to the basement stairs on the crutch)

(Scene 7)

(Nora struggles up the stairs with the crutch)

NORA

HEY! DOWN HERE!

HELLLLPP!

I'M HEREEEE!

(Nora continues to struggle and breathe heavy)

I'M HEREEEE!

I'M HEREEEE!

I'M HEREEEE!

HELLLLP

(Nora finally reaches the top the stairs)

I'm Here

I'm Here

(Nora struggles across the hallway and peaks around the corner to the front door)

(Nora stares at the front door and slowly turns around to the side)

(Dramatic music cue. Kira is smiling hard at Nora)

(An out of breath Nora is out of it as she looks at Kira)

(Dramatic shot of Kira raising her hammer in the air)

(Shot of Nora screaming as she gets hit in the head)

(Scene 8)

(Creepy music begins to play as an angry Kira starts approaching Nora)

(Dutch angle shot of Nora crawling across the living room)

(Kira is approaching closer as she holds her hammer in her hand)

(An out of breath Nora backs up against the corner of front door)

NORA

HELLLLP!

(Nora touches front door)

HELLLP!

HELLLLLPPPP!

(Slow motion shot of Nora in fear)

NORA

(Continued slow motion. Nora is scared for her life. She holds her hands out)

Stay away from me!

(Kira finally approaches Nora. She angrily raises her hammer in her hand)

(Cut to now black and white in a continued slow motion shot of Nora screaming for her  
life)

NORA

AAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

(Scene ends with Nora screaming and freezing in fear as the scene cuts to black)

(creepy music continues to play)

(End credits)

Video Link to “Haunting Punishment”

<https://vimeo.com/533144321/9c2310ec2a>

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