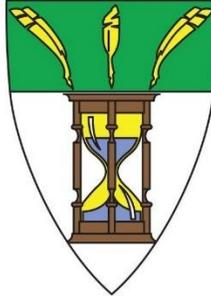


Les mémoires du Lycée Ermesinde



The Indie-Filmmaking Process or:

How to independently write and direct a no-budget short film with limited resources within 7 months?

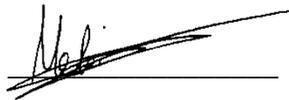
MEHIC Damir (2^oCD)

Directeur du mémoire individuel: DREWS Frank

Mersch, le 20 avril 2020

„I confirm that the work presented in this essay is my own and that I have written everything by myself“

April 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Damir Mehic', written over a horizontal line.

Damir MEHIC

“This essay has been accepted and defended on”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Frank Drews', written over a horizontal line.

Frank DREWS

Summary

This document is a parallel section of my actual work, which is a short film itself. This work is a directors diary in the behind-the-scenes making of his short film he made in the course of the last 7 months and beyond, describing the journey from script to pre-production, to the actual production of the film to the editing room. This is an experimental work that tries to discover how possible it is to make an independent short film with no budget. With this document comes additionally the actual script of the film, as well as a storyboard of the film too and the actual final cut will be presented during the “soutenance”.

Table of contents

Introduction	5
1. Production sheet	7
2. My Filmmaking Diary	8
2.1 Writing process and development.....	8
1.2 Pre-Production	17
1.3 Production.....	22
1.4 Post-Production.....	27
3. Conclusion.....	30

Introduction

„*When given an opportunity, deliver excellence and never quit.*“-Robert Rodriguez¹

Cinema has been a part of my life since I watched my first film at the age of four. It's been a passion of mine ever since; this feeling to go to a movie theater, when the lights go off and the movie starts to project to the screen, is unlike any other feeling, one I find difficulties to accurately describe in words. I never cared about any other toys as a kid, the only presents I cared about were the movies, and my first camera when I was around 10 and started to film my first stop motion short movies. These were my most dearest gifts I got as a kid. Now, over the years, since I enrolled in high school, I still went to the movies, but I never really played with the thought of pursuing the career of a filmmaker, just because it sounded like a very unstable and risky job. Instead, I tapped into many different spheres of subjects up until now; such as social sciences, journalism, environmentalism, but as interesting as all of these territories were for me, I never felt a passion strong enough for any of them that would motivate me to follow a career in any of these referred subjects. It always came back to the essence: cinema. A year ago I started reevaluating the idea of becoming a filmmaker. There is nothing in the world that intrigues me more than the craft of filmmaking; for my love for this particular art form, I would be ready to commit myself to a lifelong career around film.

Saying that you want to be a filmmaker is, however, far away from being a filmmaker. You can't just say you want to become a filmmaker, you got to have preliminary skills to become one, but how? And what skills are needed? There is no "perfect" educational path that shapes you into becoming a film director, unlike in most professions, a film degree in university won't qualify you to be one, let alone breakthrough in the industry. I believe that, the first step towards becoming a director; is by starting to make a movie by yourself!

Well, it does sound easier said than done, because all the way up to completing a movie is a process that aims for qualitative work in the long-run, hence requires months-long preparation, planning and risky decision-making in order to get it all together.

¹ Rodriguez, Robert. E P Dutton. *Rebel Without a Crew, Or, How a 23-year-old Filmmaker with \$7,000 Became a Hollywood Player.*, 1995

Many questions arise before making one, like how do I get the budget? Where do I get the crew? Where do I get my actors? Where do I get my locations? Where can I get my sets and props? There are also more creative questions that arise, such as how to shoot certain scenes the way you want them in order to convey this specific emotion or atmosphere, or how to solve certain specific solutions on set. From making a serious film, there are millions of hurdles to overcome, lots and lots of preparation, and lots of days of painful headaches of all the “how?”-s. But for making a film and telling the story you want to share to the world, there are prices you got to pay (metaphorically speaking), and as a filmmaker, these are certainly the prices I am ready to pay, no matter the costs.

As you, the reader, can guess, this isn't your "typical" memoir, it isn't about a specific subject and extensive academic research; It is one where I would like you to take you on a journey with me, where I touch territories even yet unknown to me. I will have to break certain classical conventions of a classic memoir in order for this one to work. This is a memoir about the filmmaking process and how to make one, you will be guided through me – the person making the film himself – through every single step; from the script, to the development, to pre-production, through production, through post-production and finally all the way to the silver screen.

If you are passionate about cinema or are an aspiring filmmaker, this is the right place, and you will read through this work in the form of a very personal, uncensored diary, where I share every step of the process as well be guided by my feelings, my thoughts, my pain and my glory of this journey. This document will also be guided by the script of the film, as well as various other documents as for example several storyboards, shot lists and other notes. The film itself will be presented during the official “soutenance” of my memoir in a more or less completed final cut.

1. Production sheet

CAST:

Nicolas Lesch :	<i>THE SCREENWRITER</i>
Anna Schneider :	<i>THE GIRLFRIEND</i>
Damir Mehic :	<i>THE PRODUCER</i>
Mark “Mak” Wolven :	<i>THE POLICE OFFICER</i>
Emma Delles :	<i>THE SECRETARY</i>
Gabriel Thym :	<i>GUY ON THE PHONE (VOICE)</i>

CREW:

Director :	Damir Mehic
Screenplay :	Damir Mehic
Producer :	Damir Mehic
Executive Producer :	Indira Mehic
Director of Photography :	Semir Demic
Sound Recordings :	Gabriel Thym Semir Demic
Sound Editing and Mixing :	Damir Mehic Semir Demic
Editing :	Damir Mehic
Original Music Composed by :	Elias Ortega
Costumes Provided by :	Lara Walker
Lightning Effects :	Gabriel Thym Semir Demic

PLOT SYNOPSIS:

Set somewhere in Los Angeles during the 1960s, a young screenwriter (Nicolas Lesch) of Luxembourgish origins, who has settled down in the United States of America years ago, has been trying to pursue a career as a screenwriter for a while. After many years of experiencing no success, he is hired by a B-movie producer (Damir Mehic) to write a script for him. After failing to meet his criteria, the producer gives the screenwriter one more chance to deliver him a good draft of the script. Soon, with a relationship falling apart and climbing debts, he is about to lose all signs of sanity.

2. My Filmmaking Diary

This is an uncensored diary of mine that follows my journey of making my film from scratch. It's the most honest, uncompromised version of me in this diary, from the writing process, through development, through pre-production, production, post-production all the way to the final cut, you will be following the filmmaking process and behind the scenes of "Typewriter".

2.1 Writing process and development

August 21, 2019 – Luxembourg City, Luxembourg

I think I found an idea today. I don't know if it's a good one, but I have one. After an entire summer of scrapping several ideas together of what kind of film I could make, I think I found something. I was laying down in my bed for hours until I started to write down my ideas. I imagined some dialogues in my head and just wrote whatever I felt smoothly. I don't have yet a clear pattern, I don't have a road map nor do I have an ending to this story, but I wrote like 6 pages of the script on paper.

Today was a rather weird day. My sister left today for university in France, my parents accompanied her, so I was completely alone at home. I have to take a lot of responsibilities, like feed our pet bird, cleaning the house and manage this house stuff, yet even if I feel a bit sad that my sister left today along with my parents, it was so calm in the house that I felt completely driven to write this story.

What I have is only a few pages, but it's kind of about high school at senior year and how I imagine how a struggling student would feel and experience right before the exams. I wrote this in the perspective of someone who would struggle at it, I know many students who felt depression and panic in this specific part of their lives and I want to base myself on that. I mean I was never a student who would struggle hard at school up to this point (I mean 4ieme was hard but not horrible) and of course I will exaggerate a little bit in this story, but we will see.

August 24, 2019 – Luxembourg City, Luxembourg

I wrote several pages on paper since Wednesday. I have written a total of 10 pages on paper alone, and now I'm struggling how to properly end it. I kind of wish to finish the script before I go to Venice on Tuesday but I am happy that I made it to this point. I have an outline, a story, and dialogues, but I have no idea how to properly format all of this in script form. Reading a few scripts online, it just seems super complex to actually write it in form of a script because you have to really pay attention to so many details and things, I don't know if I will be really capable of doing this, I don't know maybe it just seems very complicated from the outside. Today I wrote some scenes between the main character and the psychiatrist and the dispute scene between the main character and his parents. I really have no clue how this will all end and, most importantly, how this script will turn out in quality.

August 29, 2019 – Venice, Italy

My second day at Venice Film Festival. I met 3 new friends yesterday during the film screening after the opening ceremony and they all seem so cool, they are from Spain and are film students. The entire festival just seems so big, the accommodation, the Casino building, the Sala Grande, the red carpet, it feels unreal, and my roommate is also a very cool guy, he's from Greece and also a cinephile who also did some shorts, but does media studies in Milan. I'm blown away so far. But I just fear I won't be able to focus that much on my script since there is so much to do and I just have no idea where I can possibly write my script calmly. I don't know, it's just a first feeling. Maybe I will end up writing the best story here in Venice, I could write it at some café, or at the accommodation at Lido, idk, I'll see what I will do, I just don't wish to be either too much distracted by the festival programming or to rot away in my apartment room all day long doing nothing in terms of the script.

August 31, 2019 – Venice, Italy

Today it was kind of a crazy day. First I got to see Joaquin Phoenix in person on the red carpet and even got a freakin autogramm by him, and tonight I got to see a screening of Joker (which comes out here in October), I have no clue what to think of it but it was crazy.

Besides of that, I was wandering around Venice and I did think about how to continue the story all day long. Nice city, which got me a bit inspired, I did come up with a lot of ways how to end it. A good story can only leave a big impact with a good ending, and I found many ways how to end it, but none of them is anything special, and yea, I just need to filter the rest.

September 7, 2019 – Venice, Italy

So, after being in Venice for almost ten days, I managed to write a total of 0 pages. Well, if anyone reads this in the near future, then this might be your lesson: never expect to write a script when you are away, it will never work, at least not for me. I hoped to be able to find somewhere some sort of inspiration, whether it being the film in the program, the city itself or the people I met, but I failed at doing it in any way possible.

School starts in 11 days, my plan was it from the beginning to finalize the script before school starts. So I have 11 days to finish the story and to format it properly on screenplay format so my first draft is done.

September 10, 2019 – Luxembourg

I started to format everything I have right now in screenplay format. I just tried to type everything down in word, the way I'm learning understand screenplay-language is simply by comparing film to script; I took the script of "Trainspotting" and "GoodFellas" and analyzed certain scenes of the films and compared to how they wrote it. Remember how I said how complex it seems to write a proper screenplay in its format? Well, today I learned that it really isn't that hard to write a proper screenplay. Once you get into it, it really starts to get easy, you just have to consider a few things; Locations, scene transitions describing actions, and dialogue, while locations, characters and other things are highlighted in capital letters.

I'm not going to lie, but writing my story in screenplay format is kind of satisfying, the feeling you are writing like a "screenplay" is kind of cool. I don't know why exactly, maybe because film scripts look so complicated from the outside and you master it that easy, I really don't know how to describe this.

September 14, 2019

I have an ending! I don't know if it's a good one, but I finally have one! Now I can format the entire thing in screenplay format.

What I am trying to accomplish with this screenplay or film is it to show off the struggle of a high school student in senior year and what hurdles he has to overcome in a non-cliché way and none of the typical high school film tropes so many high school films fall off. I mean I really don't like high school films, not even the classic ones like "The Breakfast Club" since, I don't know, none of them speak to me, they feel too much like an adult's vision of what high school looks like, and they are way too cliché for my taste with the "cool kids", the "cheerleaders", the "nerd" etc., like a caricature of high school. Maybe it just might be because I didn't grow up in America, I really don't know. I would love to make a high school film that really speaks to the youth or people of the same character as my main protagonists, the struggle in youth, the stress, the responsibilities we have to take etc. I don't say my film will be able to accomplish it, that would be way too arrogant to assume, especially since I have a doubt on it, but I would love to make such a film one day, a proper coming of age film I would have loved to see in my own youth.

I also watched today the Palme d'or winning film "Parasite" in theaters, a movie from South Korea, and I am still blown away by this film. It might very well be the best film I have seen in the last 5 years. Films and stories like these are really pushing me to become a filmmaker; the fact that the director was able to tell such an amazing story without it being a big Hollywood mainstream production, is proof that you don't need to get into Hollywood to make great movies that still reach a high audience.

September 17, 2019

It's right now exactly midnight, September 18th, in 8 hours, the first day of school will be launched and I just managed to finish my entire script – in screenplay format. I have a name for the script; "Overnight", because I didn't come up with any better name. I typed everything in, my first draft is currently 23 pages long, and, I am not sure if I am ready to show it to anyone. I would like to sit down on a calm day to revise everything over again and to check

if it all makes a sense. I don't know if all the puzzle pieces fit together, I am not sure if it all makes sense, I fear there is something missing here, it kind of feels hollow in my opinion right now. But I simply don't know when I will be able to do that? On Thursday, I will be in Frankfurt for that film festival and then I will have to focus solely on school. I am kind of afraid to show it to anyone right now since – I already have my own criticisms on it – I just fear that I would make myself a laughing stock of my school.

All these years, people knew me as the “film guy” who also wrote film reviews for the school newspaper and maybe they believe – or that's how it comes across to me – that I am the film expert. But like what if they read this and don't like it?

Maybe I am just making too much out of it. I should stop to think about it, I am simply way too negative. I'm simply happy that I've done it – wrote my first screenplay, yay. Now I'll go to sleep.

September 28, 2019

Today, I met with my tutor about my project as well as Alex Bara and Xavier Thein from Chelsea Studios. I had a nice talk with them, and they seem like they are able to help me do this film; All of them want to see my script by next week. I just have to figure out when to revise the script because we got some early homework and I want to focus on school, who knows. I will see, I'm happy that I got to talk to them and to get an idea who I'm working with and who will support me.

October 3, 2019

I handed my script to Alex, Xavier and my tutor. It is still my first draft. I am nervous since I haven't found proper time to revise it.

October 10, 2019

Yep, the reaction was exactly like expected. While my tutor had minor complains about it, Alex and Xavier ripped my script to shreds. They criticized a lot, for example that the main character, Frank, is kind of a confusing character where his goals and character are not well

defined, as well as some of the dialogue and the ending and that there are no clear stakes and hurdles the character has to overcome or even real character development.

I am not angry at them at the slightest, in fact I am really happy that they shred it apart and told me what didn't work about it. It would be unpleasant if they didn't tell me the straight truth. I did feel something was missing, but I couldn't tell what. Now, I feel dumb about not having discovered immediately some basic mistakes that I've been criticizing myself in movies for years. And they were especially helpful since they basically gave me their login password to the Masterclass app. Yes, the Masterclass app, the one that pops up in everyone's YouTube ad feed and every ad feed on Instagram. I am super excited about that, I'll simply binge watch all Masterclass videos of the man, the myth I worship himself, Martin Scorsese.

But I need to find solutions soon, there isn't much time left, I want to go and focus on school and I want to start shooting soon. I really got to hurry.

October 14, 2019

I am going full feature length. What I now discovered is that my story of my short has a long Act 1, which is a very long setup for what comes next, absolutely no Act 2 whatsoever, no middle, and a rather poor and rushed Act 3. I discovered that my short, the way I wrote and conceived, simply doesn't work for a short film. But I've been simply writing and writing and I can't stop writing. I am starting to develop this as a feature film, full length, I will take Act One and continue from there. I am starting to discover the main protagonist and this world much deeper, I'm obsessed to write it and to discover more. I am so into this I can't get out, I feel like I won't be satisfied if I don't tell this story in the most proper and best way possible. The only possibility to tell this story well is by going feature length, there are so many subplots and conflicts and so much material to build a good in-depth character study. I feel like the stuff I am writing is really getting good.

October 17, 2019

Remember how I said I am currently obsessed with this story? Well, to this day, I wrote 56 pages! I can't stop thinking about it, even in class, I have started to not listen in class and just continue writing new pages to the script. My head is so into it, it'll take me a lightning

bolt to get me out of there. The story goes more into detail of the character's life, like getting a tutor, having trouble to keep a good relationship with his friends, family and girlfriend as well as some struggles that lie in the past. This could be a real tragic depiction of a high school student's life. I am so driven, but the real question is; HOW IN THE WORLD AM I GOING TO FILM IT??????? There is so much casting involved, so many locations, so much material, so much planning. I am not sure if – in case I film this – this will end up a critically acclaimed masterpiece that will get me land in Sundance and get me a distribution deal with A24, or it'd be a total embarrassing epic failure and I'll become the laughing stock of my school. I told my tutor about this and he said it won't be possible to make it a feature and I won't finish, but I'm so driven by it I don't care. I try to get the script finished in a few days so I can start with pre-production. I am really feeling it, I actually believe that the script is really good, and I want to make this, but I'm way too afraid about the execution. I'll see.

October 20, 2019

Well. Just threw the entire project to the ground. Reason; it just got way too big. All these hours of hard and creative work, all these school lessons I invested into writing, for absolutely nothing, or maybe not? I am so far with that script I really hope I can film it one day with a real budget, to be honest, I am proud of how far I came with that script and how it turned out. Or maybe when I'll become a filmmaker in the future and I open up this old script again, I'll be embarrassed, who knows.

But the point is; I'm working on something different. Something simple and small scaled. This idea floated in my head for quite some time, and I just started to write it. It's something more psychological. I simply named it "Typewriter". The story is about an unsuccessful screenwriter losing all sense of sanity while writing his latest script. The lack of ideas is leading him to insanity – his writers block. I am currently into it, and I want it to be a psychological experimental thriller film. My intent is it to try and create a dark hopeless and depressing atmosphere to the world of this screenwriter, the kind of atmosphere of "Eraserhead", "The Shining" or even the darker Coen bros stuff like "Blood Simple". I am really feeling it unlike my first script and I have the feeling this could work. It's small scaled and it and short – a story actually fitting for a short film unlike my last one – so I have enough

place for perfectionating my vision. I'm almost halfway through and I started to draw some concept art and storyboards that I'll hand to Alex and Xavier. I am kind of excited here to see the result. Atop of that, what I forgot to mention is that I finally got myself Final Draft (a program every professional screenwriter in the industry uses to write their scripts, and formats every script into screenplay format, kind of the Microsoft Word for screenwriters). It just helps me so much in the writing process. It makes my life so easier for writing my script, it 'easily accessible, all the tools are on it, so whenever I want to switch to dialogue mode, just one click and the job is done, or if I want to cut to a another location or scene, one click and it's done. To write it in screenplay format on Word is the absolute worst. Anyone who wants to write a screenplay or willing to become a screenwriter, Final Draft is absolutely recommended.

October 23, 2019

I finished my script for "Typewriter". I am actually excited to show it to some people. Unlike "Overnight", I feel like this will get better reception.

There was an idea floating in my head that I think would fit perfectly for my film. I was thinking about shooting the entire thing in black and white, and also in a 4:3 aspect ratio, very old school. The idea isn't just because I'm very attracted to black and white films and also this specific aspect ratio, but there is a much deeper layer. I've been watching certain films lately such as "First Reformed" and "Cold War", which are both in a 4:3 aspect ratio and "Cold War" is in B/W. I think the black and white would elevate this atmosphere to this dark and hopeless environment. In color, I wouldn't be conveying this atmosphere as well as in black and white, and I really don't want to play with undersaturated colors like in "The Witch", which would make the film look simply ugly. And the black bars on the side would give much more pressure to the main character, give him no room and simply pressure him, since he is under hurry and psychological pressure writing his script. Also, it just puts the characters more in the center, which I really want. So this B/W 4:3 format is rather a creative artistic decision for those who will see the film in the future, I hope, if I don't change my mind. (I won't since I'm so behind this idea)

November 7, 2019

Well, I got feedback for my script by Xavier and Alex. They liked it for the most part and think it's way better than "Overnight" (obviously). They cited they found the dialogue good and they liked the simplicity of the story and that it is very clear in this what time period it is supposed to play in (in the 1950-60s). But they said they didn't like the ending and that there is one main thing missing: They think that the sudden meltdown in the end isn't quite justified. He would need to lose more and more stuff to happen in order for the end to be justified.

I absolutely see what they want to say, and I take this criticism to change this. I will see when I will be able to do this since exams are now heading towards me and I'll have little room for improvement. I mean I have an exam in French tomorrow and I yet have to learn for it.

December 19, 2019

Just as I thought, Xavier and Alex hit me up today asking what the hell is happening with my film , and they have every right to since they haven' heard from me for over a month. I told them they will get to see my latest version after the holidays. I was just way too busy with school, there has just been too much going on in my life so I never found really time to work on it. I need to hurry up.

December 27, 2019

I got to meet with my good friend Nicolas (Lesch) at the pub to talk about the project. He was already attached to the film back when I was still doing Overnight, back in September, I sent him the new script and he shows himself enthusiastic to take the lead role. I have full trust in him, he is a talented actor and a fellow friend from our acting classes at the conservatoire, back when we did our HALBZEIT in February, he roared in his role, he was terrific, and I do very believe he is capable of doing this film. He also recommended Anna (Schneider) from the Conservatoire to take the role of the girlfriend and also his teacher, Patrick, for the role of the producer. Patrick is a professional actor and I would have to pay

him from my own pocket. I would like to take the role of the producer, but as a director, it would be too much preparation in a psychological and mental basis. To play a character and to be a director is too much for me.

January 3, 2020

Well, finished Draft 2 of “Typewriter” and I am happy of how it turned out to be. I added a subplot of the main character on how he hasn’t paid his rent for months and that he will lose his apartment in 3 days, also I added a dispute scene between his girlfriend and him to show the fragile state of relationship between the two and how all of this is leading to his downfall. And I also changed the ending the way Alex and Xavier wanted me to, which is just better.

1.2 Pre-Production

January 9, 2020

Alex approved the script. Xavier hasn’t read it, but Alex gave his greenlight. Now I go into pre-production!

It’s now all about the organization, the part I am the most scared about. Now I have to find

1. Who to cast as the role of the producer? (Patrick jumped out due to schedule problems, in worst case scenario, if I find nobody to play that character, I will have to jump in)
2. Who will compose my short? (I might ask certain people I know, I will ask Karma Catena (ex-student of LEM, known under the name “C’est Karma”)
3. Who will be my DoP (Director of Photography)? (I have no clue, maybe someone for school, like Lisa Davezac from Iere or even Moris Kemp, an ex-student who’s a hobby photographer)
4. How will I get my budget? (I will try to contact Feierblumm Films, to see if they can help me there or even produce it)
5. Who will produce it? (ask Feierblumm)
6. How will I get the equipment? (ask Feierblumm)

7. How will I get the sets and costumes? 5 Alex recommended to talk to Lara Walker from Entreprise Couture for the costumes)
8. How will get my location? (absolutely no clue whatsoever, I can't shoot it at some random modern apartment, so I will see if Feierblumm will help me)

I can expect this to be a horror month. I am trying to schedule the shoot for the holidays in February so everyone will have the time. So many questions. So much to do, how in the world will I get this all done before February.

I think I will have many nightmares in the next few nights.

January 15, 2020

So I had a meeting with someone working at Feierblumm, (someone it turns out I know, he interviewed me for Radio 100,7 last year at the Luxembourg Film Festival, when I was part of the Youth Jury). He explained me many things about Feierblumm, how they work and how I should go into pre-production etc. He explained me that they won't be able to send some people on set since everyone is overcharged with other work, but they could rent some equipment to me and I could have a workshop with the vice president of Feierblumm on Cinematography on black and white and how to work with lightning. I am thankful for the opportunity they offer me and these resources, I am looking forward on that.

I wrote Karma a few days ago about the composition, but she told me she was busy and she will talk to me later. She hasn't responded since. I yet have to find a location....oh it's all just too much for me to handle, and where would I find a real typewriter????

January 23, 2020

I finally found THE perfect location for the film. My mom put me in contact with one of her friends, by the name of Paca Rimbau Hernandez, a translator and writer for "Woxx" and I got to see her apartment (she is a very cool and kind lady as well). THE perfect location. The. Perfect. Location. Enough room for filming and perfect 60s style apartment with 60s kitchen and all of that. I don't have to add a whole bunch to the production design.

That isn't the crazy part yet: She decided while I was in her place that she will go on a vacation in Paris in February so we can film in her apartment. I mean.....who in the hell would be that kind to do something like that for me. I couldn't believe what I heard when she told me this. I have no words for this.....I need to find a way to thank myself to her.

As soon as she announces the dates of when she will be away, I will start scheduling my shoot, look with my actors for their availability, I'm happy now that I have a central location, this might be the hardest part who knows.

It's not all over yet since I have to find a second location, to film my opening scene. Where am I going to find an office. I will ask my school for permission to film that scene in one of their offices at the secretariat, since, why in the world wouldn't they let one of their students film a movie in their building?

I am going to get my costumes by Lara Walker too. I reached out to her and she said that she would love to help me and rent me her wardrobes. My task: Get my actors' measurements. I am so lucky right now, it all comes right step by step.

My main location is secured, I got all of my actors, I got my wardrobes.

I need yet to get my equipment, a DoP, props and a music composer. My search continues.

February 5, 2020

I got parts of my props ready (a friend of my mom gave me a typewriter and we bought another one for safety sakes) and I met a guy by the name of Semir Demic, my mom is a friend of his family, she knows him since he was a little boy. Who is he? My mom contacted him to ask him if he can come for diners and talk about the possibility of him being my DoP and co-editor on my project. He was a DoP on several music videos from rappers in Germany and he was a camera guy for news reports in Steinsel for local television. I talked to him and I'm not gonna lie he is one of the most calmest persons I ever met. He is a really terrific guy and he would be ready to help me. One problem: He has a full-time job. How will he work on a Friday and Monday? (Our shooting schedule: Friday, February 14-Monday, 12th February + additional shooting on Saturday, February 29th). He gave me a proposition: he

will ask a friend of his to come on Friday to help me with the shoot, and he has also some knowledge on cinematography, but Monday, we will see.

I am all in all happy that I got a cinematographer on my side. The puzzle is getting finally together. How the hell does my mom know all of these people? She is my driving force, I love her and the help she offers is amazing.

February 8, 2020

I've lost Feierblumm! They won't rent me their equipment!!!! I was in full panic today! I called that guy I had the meeting with today and he told me that the review for my request would take them 3 weeks, and I will start shooting on Friday! I was so I panic, I had to write Alex per mail to ask if their school will be open on Monday-Tuesday and if they have the equipment I need. I was so lucky that he responded me right back and told me I can use their equipment. I told him I needed a camera, lightning equipment, a microphone, sound equipment and a tripod, apparently they got it all! I am so lucky to be at LEM, what other school would offer that much for help to me?

I had my rehearsals with Nicolas and Anna. Anna is pretty good in her role, I am just afraid if Nicolas will be able after all to play out his role well. There was a bit of overacting, over-the-top line delivery and too much theatrical play. Too much energy being put into in the beginning when his character is supposed to be rather calm until the last minute. Maybe it's.....the first day of rehearsal..... maybe when they get back tomorrow, it'll get better, maybe I worry a bit too much.

February 9, 2020

Rehearsal today with Nicolas was way better. Not perfect yet, but better. I think he will ace it all the way until Friday. I also gave him three films from my collection so he can prepare, as well as some articles about stories of failed actors and screenwriters who tried to make it in Hollywood so he can set himself well into the character. I gave him the movies "Taxi Driver", "First Reformed" and "Barton Fink" to see the performances of Robert De Niro, Ethan Hawke and John Turturro to watch so he can see what kind of performances I am expecting from him: quiet but angry inside, calm seeming up until the end, lost and confused

in the inside. I have a good feeling about this. I see he took some criticisms well and I hope there will be even more progress.

February 10, 2020

I got my costumes today and hell it looks amazing. The stuff I got looks just wonderful. I learned today how important costumes are to make a film more alive, they can define a character, they can say something about him and they make a film look more beautiful to watch. Up until this point, I never valued the importance of costumes and wardrobe in film.

February 11, 2020

I got to get my equipment today and holy shit! Never in my lifetime did I expect my school to have this kind of equipment. They got:

- A Black Magic camera with a 16-35mm lens
- ARRI lightning pulps
- Two giant lightning panels
- A microphone with a ZOOM-Great attached
- Two tripods

What in the world. I have hopes again that the film will look at least professional, this kind of equipment is perfect. I am astonished, I am so grateful to be a student at LEM, now I can go on and sleep again.

By the way, I also rehearsed with Nicolas since I won't be able to rehearse with him until Friday (he will be very busy by then), but after seeing him today, I have no doubts he will give a convincing and strong performance of Friday. I am excited.

February 12, 2020

Now I had a meeting with Mak Wolven, the American filmmaker Ms. Hernandez put me in contact with, in his own home. We talked about many things, like how he gets along as an independent filmmaker, his problems he faced and how he handles shooting. He also agreed to play the police officer at the end (I mean he got a real American accent, perfect for my

American setting). He is a very chill guy to talk to and also teaches you valuable stuff. I am glad that I got into contact with him, he will help me on set too on Saturday!

As for the rest, I will complete tonight a shot list and design my shots, as well as draw some storyboards.

1.3 Production

February 14, 2020

FIRST DAY OF SHOOTING!!!!!! Man I can't really explain myself in words. I thought it would be a pain in the ass just like everything was up until this day. Everyone kept telling me that production will be super relaxing and satisfying, even Mak and Gabriel. But yea, it was really relaxing and cool. I mean the first half of the day, we had to settle down all of the equipment at Paca's apartment and to renovate a little bit since a. we had literally no room to film or to place our equipment and b. we simply had to in order to make it look like this is not our time right now and make it kind of look like it's the 60s. I put up some posters on the wall, some post-its, placed all the props and all the unnecessary stuff we placed in her bedroom or in her bathroom. We started filming around 2PM when everything was ready. Our first scenes were basically a shot of Nicolas going towards his apartment door, then how he picks up the letters, reads them. This took us many hours since we had to shoot this scene from so many different angles and there was not enough room for us to really film certain scenes exactly as I wanted to.

Then the scene where Nicolas enters his apartment and has his first dialogue exchange with Anna were filmed at night, yes it took us that long. We were clearly behind time schedule since half of the scenes we wanted to film today were not completed. We have to reschedule them tomorrow, the scene how he enters his room, and types some stuff on his typewriter and when he goes towards the kitchen to tell Anna to stop the music, all this had to be filmed today but is rescheduled for tomorrow. A lot to catch up on. But I am very satisfied with the way certain shots ended up, especially the conversation between Anna and Nicolas I really liked, there is some nice lightning and focus shift. As relaxing and cool the first day was, we

have to be really quickly and move fast tomorrow so we will complete all of the scenes by Monday. But yea, was a really cool day 1.

February 15, 2020

Day 2, I arrived as soon as I woke up. I prepared all of the props and sets at the writer's room, since I didn't complete all of it yesterday, and now this room then was ready to be filmed in. Mak came today to help us, he visited the set and helped with the sound, was really nice of him to come by. As for the rest, this was a log day, my actors and the rest took a break, but I had no break whatsoever today. I don't know if that makes a whole lot of sense but this was one of my most "completed" and "fulfilling" days ever, where you feel so satisfied for all the work that you deserved your rest at the end of the day. Everything went really fast since we had to move on, and besides of one little scene that we were supposed to shoot today and the rescheduled to tomorrow, we did complete all of our scenes today. It was, even if really quick and fast, really cool and satisfying. There is one mistake I regret, and it was about Anna. She waited all day for filming only to end up filming her scene at the end of the day. I feel bad about it, I should have filmed her scene maybe first or maybe tell her to come back later, but that poor girl just waited and waited, I feel like she started to lose her patience toward the end. I guess that's how you see I am a beginner. We created some really nice shots of Nicolas and we had some really nice camera movements for which I am impressed of. And I have to say, Semir is one of the most relaxed people I have ever seen, he is in no hurry, is very optimistic and does a great job. I love to work with him. Also we ended up to wrap filming today very late. We had to finish the conversation scene with Anna. We completed Anna's scene but then she had to leave, so we had to film a frontal medium shot of Nicolas looking at the direction where Anna was supposed to be saying the line "*Can you please turn this off? I am trying to work here!*". This scene needed around 20 takes for it to be done, that was insane.

February 16, 2020

Okay, I tried to avoid the mistake I did yesterday and I prioritized the dispute scene between Anna and Nicolas today immediately early on. I first completed the scenes with Nicolas that we were supposed to finish yesterday, and then immediately, the dispute scene. I also told Anna and Nicolas that they can improvise a line or two in Luxembourgish about how both characters left Luxembourg for America, since the audience is going to ask, if this takes place in California, why the hell are both main characters speaking in a thick Luxembourgish accent, and I liked the result that came out. I liked the shots that came out today and the dispute scene had to be done quickly since Nicolas had to leave around 1PM for a football match, so we tried our best to work fast and efficient, the dispute scene took us a hell lot of takes, but I remember, I had to take over the sound recording today, and when both actors delivered their best take, I forgot to press the record button, yea that was embarrassing, but I was happy they gave an even better take afterwards. We managed to finish all the scenes with Anna and Nicolas before he had to leave and I told Anna she was done for today too. Semir had a Sunday migraine so both of us decided to go home until 7 when Nicolas was supposed to go back. I also started to feel some sort of migraine, I fell asleep for straight 2 hours, but I still had enough energy to finish our day.

Well we finished all of our scenes that were scheduled for today except for the scene where Nicolas destroyed the typewriter since a. everyone was too tired and b. we really didn't want to wake up the neighbors. This is also something I was afraid of; I feared we would be so loud during the dispute scene or any scene that includes yelling, that the neighbors would call the police, so far, nothing happened. We left the set around 11PM, we were all tired, but we had to finish all of it tomorrow.

Also, I was thinking all week about the kitchen burning scene and how to film it; we had no vaporizer, we didn't wanted to start an actual fire, so we decided to do this; we did a close up of a sleeping Nicolas, then he hears a big yelling "*What the f**k did you do to my kitchen*" by Anna, then he runs towards her while the camera pans towards the ticking clock at the wall while we only hear them on the background improvising their reactions in the kitchen to the fire. I mean that'll do it.

February 17, 2020

And that's a wrap! WE FINISHED!!!! I am so happy! We did it! We completed our very last scene at 3PM. First, we filmed the police at the door scene with Mak early on so we could move on with the other scenes, which ended up pretty well, then we filmed the rest of the necessary scenes and last but certainly not least, the cream of the crop, the most hard scene to film; the destruction of the typewriter scene. We had to do a lot of preparation on how to shoot it, we didn't have enough space in the room to shoot it the way I wanted it to, nor was our lens able to capture all of the room, the take of him how he throws the typewriter to the ground had to be one take, but after filming one take, it turned out Semir couldn't capture all of the scene, so we had to do it all over again, which was hilarious, but still, the typewriter wasn't yet all destroyed so. Then before Nicolas destroyed the typewriter with a hammer from the next angle, I told him to leave all the rage out he can, and hell he did.

At 3 we were done and I and Semir had only time until 5PM to arrange and bring back everything together in the apartment the way it was before we came. Man that was more bigger of a job than the filming, but we managed to do it all. Now, I am super happy for this experience, I enjoyed filming and I had a fun time, and I am super proud of what we've done, but I'll take a rest for the rest of the week.

February 25, 2020

Yep, just as we prepared for shooting on Saturday, I had a meeting with M. Özen to tell me they can't give me their offices on Friday to shoot the film there due to the countless documents that will be there and because of certain data protection laws. I was in a panic unlike ever. I thought this was the end of it all. I didn't know what to do. I called several people for help, I was all over the place, the opening scene is crucial for the film to get into the story. Without the context, the other scenes would be worthless. But I was hyper hyper hyper lucky that my parents called my dad's boss to ask if we can film our short in their offices, and he gave me a big yes. Once again I was saved from a disaster and I will be forever lucky to my father's boss for giving me this opportunity. I don't know what else would I do? What place exists out there that kind of looks like an office where I could film in? I don't know that place, but.....I'm simply lucky.

February 26, 2020

I think I caught a lucky day today. I found a composer for my film; Elias Ortega, an experimental composer from Panama. The fact that he wrote back and expressed interest of doing it is just insane, I didn't even expect to get a response. How did I get him on board? Ok; I have been looking for over a month for a possible composer here in Luxembourg, but I had no success; either I got no response, or they had no time, the reasons are multiple. So, at one night, I listened to the composition of this guy on YouTube (he got his own channel) and I liked the stuff I heard, very weird and experimental, would fit perfectly for my film, and he worked on other indie film projects before: There is this YouTuber called ralphthemoviemaker, who does long analytical and satirical movie reviews on YouTube and has over 600.000 subscribers, and he did a few film projects such as "Lover" and "Golden Hour", and Elias did the composition on those two films. So that's how I originally discovered him, so I decided "hey, why not try to contact him? It won't cost you anything? You have nothing to lose". So I wrote him two days ago and now he said he would love to do it.

I am extremely happy since I believe that a film score is one of the most essential and crucial aspects of a film, they can set the tone of a scene and also build up the tone of the next scene. This is best showcased in horror since there, you would need a score that would haunt the viewer and set the viewer in a scary mood, not just some random music. In order to convey a dark atmosphere, I need original music that can really elevate my scenes to something better. I'm not saying my short is anything great, who am I to judge, but having a haunting, dark and menacing and even weird score would certainly make my film better, since building this dark atmosphere in the film was already one of the most crucial things to me while filming and writing. Atop of that, the best scores are of course the most unique and original ones, which falls perfectly into the category of Elias, because I would be a laughing stock if I just would insert some stock horror music from RoyaltyFreeMusic.

The only thing I hope now is to a. to be able to express to him what kind of music I want and b. negotiate a good price. I have no budget for the film so I will see if it will be affordable to pay him from my own pockets.

February 29, 2020

Today we filmed the opening scene at my dad's firm. The office they gave us was nice, and we had to work in the setting again. I had no time to prepare myself for the role, we took many takes for only my scenes. I mean I think my scenes ended up ok, but I could have done better. I delivered way better performances in the past. I am not very satisfied with my scenes. I'll take that as further notice, if I direct something again and act in it to be super prepared. But it ended up pretty ok I guess. I don't have much to say, I am happy we finished.

1.4 Post-Production

March 3, 2020

I got to talk to Elias today over WhatsApp. He is a very nice, chill guy and I explained him more about the project and the story and he seems very interested. The way he talks really shows he isn't some guy who will rip you off, which I was also scared from at the beginning. Also what I was scared by was the costs. I told him I have no budget whatsoever, not even for music and that I will pay him from my own pockets. He told me his usual tariff was \$100/minute, but if he likes a project or the script, he could reduce it. I am glad about that.

March 13, 2020 – Friday the 13th.

Yep, that's about it. We will have off of school for straight 2 weeks, we are forced to stay home, and I won't be able to see Semir to edit the film together. Great. I don't have the footage of the film since I can't open the footage that is saved on my Hard disc (but Semir still can open the film, thank god), and I have no editing software. The only way to edit it will be, well, doing it through Skype. That will be a disaster.

March 17, 2020

I managed to negotiate a fair price with Elias. I sent him some rough footage of the film and he complimented me by saying the shots and the cinematography were beautiful, they reminded me of the films of Ingmar Bergman, which is perhaps the best compliment anyone can get (perhaps, Ingmar Mehic? Hehe, btw that was so ironic since I saw "Persona" by

Bergman just the night before that for the first time). He gave me some ideas of how to balance the tone well with the soundtrack and we negotiated a price of \$35/minute, which is more than generous and fair. I'll prepare a contract for him.

April 3, 2020

I've been editing with Semir per Skype the last few days. I have to say I didn't like this way of working together at all, but we got to live with it. He shows me a screen of his laptop of how he edits the film on Adobe Premiere and I give him instructions of how I imagined the scenes.

I had a tutorat with my tutor per Zoom, and he told me he wants me to edit the film all alone. I told him it would be nice and all but I don't have my film nor do I have an editing software. He asked me to ask Alex if he could give me the license for Adobe per mail, but later, I decided to take this big risk: I decided to buy the license to Adobe Premiere today and to edit it all alone with it. I thought hard about it and I came into the conclusion not only is there no other way to edit the film in a better way, but I believe it's a intelligent purchase since I will occupy myself with filmmaking in the future and I will have to have an editing software for my future projects.

I think I will end my diary here since there isn't anything interesting now to talk in detail about the editing process. I hope that now, in the near future, whoever reads this, that this pandemic and this self-quarantine thing will have ended by this point and that you will get to see the final result in the way I wanted to.

May 3, 2020

I cut a first rough cut and saw my film. I had to cringe all the way through it. I felt like it's a failure, but apparently, that's how every director reacts to their first cut. Every filmmaker is his worst critic. But that also means: There need to be MANY changes.

I have thought of maybe cutting certain parts of the opening, and I will edit certain scenes on the typewriter faster, shorter and better because as of right now, they are killing the pacing of the film, and I have to kind of get it to a shorter runtime, at least 20 min. Not 30 minutes.

And I still have to work on the sound design and sound mixing, I really want the scenes on the typewriter to have a high volume in the sound mixing to really even make the sound of typing on the typewriter, as well as the clock ticking, sound terrifying and annoying at the same time to the main character, and after watching tutorials on YouTube how to do that, I just wished to have a sound editor and sound mixer. It's so difficult. I mean Semir did a little bit of that already, he did an ok job, but I just wish we could work on it together, but man, this situation.... And to properly color grade it into black and white is also one giant clusterf***. It isn't enough to add some film grain and to put a b/w template, there is so much more to do. Today, Elias will send me a first demo of the music. It better be good and add something to the scenes. Man there is so much yet to do. I just have to pay attention and look how to shorten or edit some little details in order to make the pacing feel smother. Simply fix things. Watching this first cut, I never realized how many continuity errors there are, I will see if there are any ways to fix these in post. And then all the rest I have to do, sound editing, mixing, and color grading. God help me.

3. Conclusion

Well, that was what I call a journey, a crazy journey. That was an experience unlike any other. There is so much I can take from this experience, so much I learned, so many mistakes I made which made me a bit wiser. All these years watching movies and reviewing them at the school newspaper never made me realize how hard it is to make one, I mean I assumed it is very hard when reading or watching the behind-the-scenes of a movie, but I didn't expect it to be *such* a huge job. It is easy for an audience member or a critic to nitpick around a movie they watch, but they really will never see a movie the same way again after making one by themselves. That's at least how I feel.

I think the most important part for an independent director is the script. Not only does it have to be really good as you try your best to perfection it, but also it needs to be kept simple and being realistic to produce something that can be made with a budget next to nothing. Because the thing is, the possibility your production design, acting, and equipment or locations might be limited to the barest minimum, but sometimes it doesn't matter that much if a film is good-looking if you don't have an intriguing story that will grasp the audience's attention. I failed with my first script but with my second one, while probably not being perfect, I tried my best to keep it simple (simple to be done, at least that's what I thought until it turned out that even that was too ambitious for a super small budget) and to keep it as interesting and good as possible. Your film isn't made for yourself, you make it for a public and you got to perfection it in case you will be naturally lacking in other areas. The script is the center core of your film. Alfred Hitchcock said it himself the best: *"To make a great film you need three things – the script, the script and the script."*²

But once I perfected the script, the story, dialogue etc. in the best way I could, tried everything in my power to assemble the best team and equipment possible in order for this to work. I learned that making a film is about conveying something to the audience, whether it is an atmosphere, a story that could be real, emotions, environment, you got to create a "mise en scene" that conveys to the audience that this is a real world and a real setting, not just some film student with a camera filming some actors delivering their lines. That's the

² <https://m.imdb.com/name/nm0000033/quotes>

magic of the movies that needs to be conveyed. That was when the film got into development and pre-production, which is probably the hardest part to get passed by. During pre-production, this is where you got to play your own producer as an independent filmmaker. In pre-production, it's all about getting your crew, casting your actors, getting your locations, sets, props, equipment; scheduling, budget, all of the organization is on your own hands and you got to deal with it extremely careful and well. There, communication and negotiation skills are the most crucial, where you got to be very careful of how you approach certain people since you are the one asking for help, not them. Selfishness and arrogance would absolutely murder you in this situation. Why it ended up being my least favorite part is that you can get very far into pre-production; having assembled your cast and crew, get your equipment etc. but there is *always* (I really emphasize of the word always) the danger that one small part or everything could fall apart and you would have to start all over again or cancel all of it, no matter if it is one actor jumping out, you not getting certain location on time. Pre-production can be hell of a nightmare where you feel your heart beat unlike any other situation when you have no budget or no people you know etc. I had the luck that my mother has a lot of friends and contacts she put me in touch with that helped me with my project for free, and I am extremely glad that I am a student at Lycée Ermesinde that were able to provide me with good equipment because without all of this, my film would have looked like a joke. Just alone bad sound editing and mixing could alone kill a film since the audience will not tolerate bad sound. And poor cinematography would make your film unpleasant, bad editing would make your film confusing, bad acting can make your film become an unintentional comedy etc. All these pieces need to be collected during pre-production. Movies are like a puzzle, they consist of elements like cinematography, editing, acting, lightning, music, etc. they all need to fit, the better they fit, the better the movie is.

Then, when all of this was done, production comes. That's where the real deal starts. Pre-production might be the most stress inducing part, production might cause stress, it still is more fun than stress since you finally got all the pieces together to start filming, but why still stressful, I'll get to that later. But first, you got to meet your crew, your cinematographer especially express your ideas for the film, your vision of how you want your film to look, what shots you want to create, what atmosphere you want to convey, etc. It is your job to

explain your vision to your crew. You explain, they create. Also you meet your actors, you go deep into their characters while rehearsal, discover new things about them and to get the best performances out from them so they will be ready for the shoot and not waste too much time for 127 takes on a single scene on set. Then when everything is ready and the cameras roll on day one on set, you can relax, but not too much. Since the one thing that causes stress on set is time. Time is your biggest enemy. When you are behind schedule, that's when you are in a lot of trouble. We had only four days to shoot all of our scenes in the apartment, on day one, we only managed to shoot half of the scenes that were planned on that day so we were in a big hurry to complete them in the next day while finishing all the other scenes that were planned on that day too. That's why you are moving constantly on set and you are working all the time, there is almost no time to take a break for you, even when the cast and crew have a break, but that's the fun part of work; this is the kind of work that I couldn't sleep if I don't get it done by the end of the day. It isn't some job I am forced to do, I am driven to create this, and it's on set where you discover if you really want to become a filmmaker or not and if you really love what you do. Then the biggest thing about shooting is that it is mostly about solving the problems on set; Like how to create a neo noir lightning to your picture, or how to film certain scenes when certain actors are not available or how to shoot certain scenes when certain props are already destroyed or how to capture the image of an entire room with only a 16-35mm lens? There are many, many, many problems that will occur on set, and you as the director needs to fix it. But to be honest, that's also the kind of fun about filmmaking, once you are into this and you are driven to make a good film, these creative and logistic problem solving on set become fun, the become like a game to you. There will be many mistakes that will occur to you when you start out. I haven't made that many mistakes on set, at least none I have yet discovered since I tried to be as professional as possible on set in order to avoid amateur filmmaking mistakes, but one mistake I made which was probably my biggest one was this one: I let Anna, the actress who played the girlfriend character, wait for many, many hours on set on the second day of shooting and we only filmed her scenes at night. She got bored and she almost lost her patience, and if I knew the scenes I will film with Nicolas separately will take an entire day long, I would have either filmed them at the beginning of the day or I would have told her to go back home and to come back around 6 or 7PM to film her scenes. I regretted it, but she was forgiving and didn't

took it too hard, we are still friends, and I did learn from my mistakes on the next day, starting to film her scenes right at the beginning of the day so she could be free for the rest of the day. I am happy that no relationship got broken on set because, here is another thing about filming; you got to get the best crew together not only from their qualities but also from their attitude, because if you start to clash on set with certain key people, then that's where the problems start and you get into a lot of trouble and lose all fun in it. I was lucky I had the best crew possible on set because everyone had patience, everyone was calm and everyone loved to work on this project together, and that is the best way to get a movie done. Another important thing I learned is how much of a team player sports filmmaking really is. Unlike what the auteur theory by Francois Truffaut that the director owns all ownership on a film and is a work that solely only belongs to him, it really isn't all about the director, which is a great thing, you have to be ready to trust certain people at their work; trust the actors that they will deliver a good job, trust the cinematographer at his job etc. It's a team sports and everyone should play its part, everyone plays his position. To be a control freak in such a situation is just harming you and your team, off course you want it to be a good work, but so does everyone and you have to sometimes let it be and to trust your key people. Filming was a wonderful experience that really made me wiser for the future.

In post-production, as far as I've come, I have to say this. It might be the most relaxing job of the entire process, it's kind of the reward you get for the other steps. In post, it's about bringing the film together, bringing all the pieces together and fixing the film in a way that to create a coherent film. When I watched my first cut, I had to cringe horribly, but I guess I learned that it is with every filmmaker the same thing. Martin Scorsese himself said it during his masterclass videos; "*If you don't get physically ill seeing your first rough cut, something is wrong.*"³. In editing, it's about fixing the errors, working on the small details, sometimes trying out other things that completely drive you away from the original idea, it's where you make the film work. And there comes a lot of color grading, sound mixing and sound editing in place where I yet still have to work on.

³ Jonny Elwyn - Film Editor. 2018. Martin Scorsese Teaches Filmmaking Masterclass Review. [online] Available at: <<https://jonnyelwyn.co.uk/film-and-video-editing/cool-videos-films-projects-creative-work/martin-scorsese-teaches-filmmaking-masterclass-review/>> [Accessed 19 April 2020].

I can say that everyone can make a film, it just needs to be perfected in every aspect possible and the budget only depends on the scale of the story. If I would have made an science fiction film taking place on mars, a no budget would never in a lifetime being taken seriously. As well, it isn't all possible to make a serious film with really no budget, I mean at the end of the day, I still ended up paying for the music for my film so yea. But then again, it really depends on the scale of the story. And at the end, with the money that I ended up spending on the project, I can't call it no longer a "no-budget" film - since I had one – but I would categorize it as a "modest budget" or simply "low-budget".

This experience taught me a lot of things, my whole perception of film even changed, in the best way possible, and I can only thank everyone who has been to this journey with me, everyone who worked with me and helped me complete my vision and to help me on my first step as a filmmaker, my entire cast and crew, my family, especially my wonderful mother and sister who helped me even at the darkest times in pre-production, they were my driving force and without them, I don't know if I would get ever this far. I hope that this confinement will get over soon so that my film, regardless of the reception it gets, will get to see the lights of the day. At this place, I want to give special thanks to these specific people who helped me massively on this project:

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