

Process Book

“A Day in His Life” - short mockumentary

Name: Neda Parczewska

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Student ID: 89611117

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Concept

The idea for this mockumentary came from one of the crew members and the director herself, Alyana Liepach. She gathered everyone together and began to talk about a French film which incorporated the idea where women wore masculine clothes and attributed mostly masculine features, while men were feminine and experienced immense oppression due to their “lesser” role in society. The team, which consisted of myself, Alyana and Madeleine Jesch at the time, became drawn to the idea of recreating this and building our own story with a similar theme. The idea gained more individuality once we decided to come up with a short film where our main focus was demonstrating how it would look like to live as a man in a matriarchy.

The plot

The plot of our project focuses on Nikki, an eccentric, self-centered influencer who prioritises his online image, looks and fame. At first, it seems as though the plot doesn't go beyond a satirical commentary targeted at social media figures, however as everything unravels, we realize it's deeper than that as we observe Nikki being harassed, judged and followed, not because of his rocky personality, but rather the fact that the power imbalance between women (the "stronger gender") and men (the "weaker gender") becomes more and more prominent. As Nikki guides a camera crew through a day in his life, he experiences an online smear campaign, sexually explicit comments, body shaming and sexist remarks from his female friends. Once he thinks he's returning home to his loving girlfriend after a long day, he's absolutely crushed when this aspect of his life also comes crumbling down and he catches his partner cheating. The mockumentary ends on a bittersweet note; the interviewer implies that Nikki's reality consists of a lack of equality between genders and poor treatment rooted in prejudice, a point which Nikki ultimately fails to understand, therefore remaining unaware of how much all of these events affected him.

Objective

The most important point of the film was to mock people who view women as one-dimensional and hysterical, as well as the ones who generalise them and perceive them through the lens of primitive stereotypes, as opposed to understanding that most women continuously strive for individuality, even if it means jeopardizing their peace, careers, reputations and, quite often, safety. The other key goals of the short film included:

- Representing a society where gender roles are reversed
- Constructing an environment in which the viewer initially believes the satire is directed towards influencers, not misogynists
- Building up space for the viewer's nuanced reflection and using comedy/absurdity as a tool which can be used to communicate serious, sexism-related undertones

Planning process

Initial assignment

The idea first came to life when we were introduced to a much smaller task introduced to us by Prof. Dickmann during class. This is when Alayana Liepach first told us about the concept she'd been thinking about. Madeleine Jesch and I were enthralled. Since this assignment required less professionalism, we asked a friend, David Caspar, if he would like to star in a two minute mockumentary trailer. The small project was called: "Her Own Fault" and David played a distressed woman, also limited by stereotypes and clichés. The major difference here was that David played a female character in a universe where women are men and men are women, whereas in our more elaborate project, we decided to create a system opposite to the patriarchy and have our protagonist be a man who lives his life under matriarchal oppression, since we decided it would be more intriguing to redefine gender roles, not switch them completely.

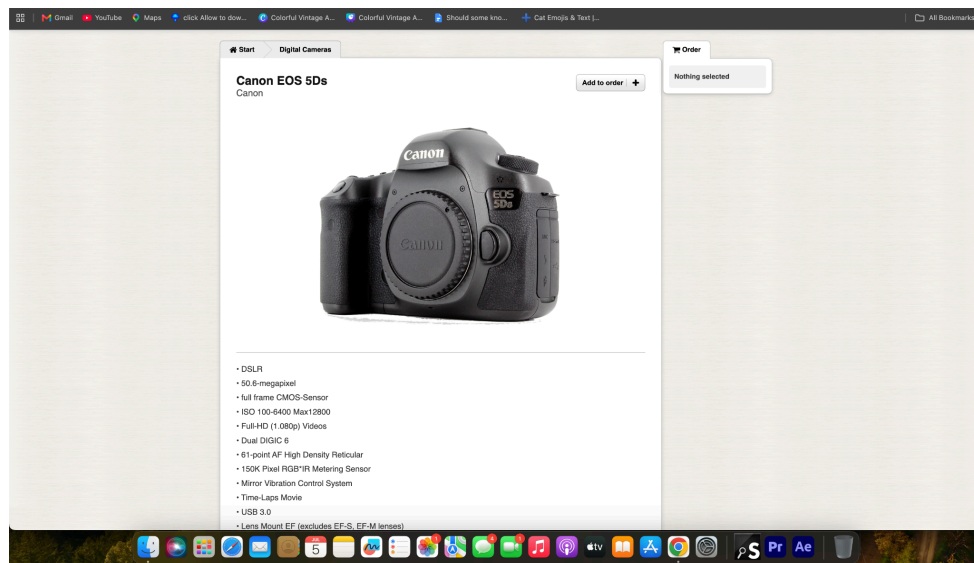
The crew

Once we had an outline of what we wanted our film to become, we decided we needed more people to contribute. Our colleague, Reem, stated that she wanted to join and we were thrilled. At last, this is who ended up being part of our main crew:

- Alyana Liepach - director, writer, director of photography, DOP
- Reem Aita - assistant director, assistant DOP, gaffer, color grading
- Madeleine Jesch - sound operator, sound designer, subtitles
- Han Yasin - actor, protagonist
- Neda Parczewska (myself) - assistant writer, assistant editor, producer

Equipment

One of my most crucial roles was that I was the person in charge of submitting the renting request for the equipment. Since we had an interview section of the project and we also needed to record dialogues, the director instructed me to rent two microphone types: a large Rode mic with a boom, as well as a set of lavaliers. Additionally, I ended up renting one camera only, since all of the videography kits from the arsenal were already booked. Due to the complication, I rented a Canon EOS 5Ds camera with two different lenses. Lastly, we also rented LED lights, which proved to be effective in creating a soft look for the interior shots.



Props

For our props, we mostly relied on objects found during the filming process itself. For instance, a unique scarf that our protagonist was wearing became an important element of his image, even though it was given to him by the director at the apartment we filmed at. Moreover, the fluffy coat he wore outside was given to the protagonist by the director as well. Other props, such as the stuffed animal for the interview, were already placed as part of our set design before the main actor arrived, as opposed to the pink bra belonging to the mistress, which we had to specifically set up at the time we were filming the fight scene. Lastly, the only object that was planned more thoroughly were my META glasses, which we arranged to use as the predator's tool for the harassment scene.

Filming locations

Our director wanted for our project to have a wide variety of shots, in order to accurately represent the experience of living in Berlin. We initially started in our director's apartment near Frankfurter Alle, a beautifully unique spot with many posters and decorations. This was crucial, since influencers tend to prioritise their living quarters and create a cozy environment to capture on camera. The apartment served as a place for us to film the interviews, the livestream, the scenes on the staircase, the moment when our protagonist is reading his comments, as well as the fight scene. Additionally, we filmed the protagonist meeting up with his friends at the Späti. Once we were there, we recorded some footage of the sidewalk and the main character eating falafel. To achieve the shopping and harassment scene, we relocated to Warschauer Straße. The very last scene had to be recorded in a car, which is why we ordered a vehicle from an app called "MILES" and captured Nikki taking selfies.

Production

Improvisation as a tool

The most significant aspect of our production process was prioritising improvisation. At first, our director provided everyone with a script, but after some time she decided to take a different route. She said that the script isn't useless, since it provides the actors and crew with order and helps the actors understand the main message that they need to get across, however ultimately, she encouraged every single actor to improvise and urged the cast to let their intuition lead. This approach was not only fitting, since it enforced unique and, at times, outrageous dialogue, which plays a major part in the mockumentary genre, it also made the experience more relaxing and pleasant than any production I recall being a part of prior. The improv proved to be brilliant, especially during the fight scene, since every actor was allowed to test the limits of absurdity and openly contribute to the film's dramaturgy in their very own fashion.

Set design

Another element of production we paid a lot of attention to is how each scene was designed. As opposed to props, this aspect of our work was more precise. Firstly, we spent about twenty-five minutes building the interview set-up and we ended up being very fulfilled with the results. It required two LED lights and positioning them in a way that they shined on both the protagonist and all his surroundings, placing pink objects in the background and in front of the camera to introduce a particular color balance, as well as testing out the ways in which we could decorate the couch. Additionally, set design and camera positioning was crucial in the Späti scene, mostly due to the fact that we needed to sit everyone in the assigned spots and be able to quickly move the camera from one person to the other as the dialogues and reactions came into play. To do that, we had the actors sit very close to each other, so that the DOP would have a flexible visual field.



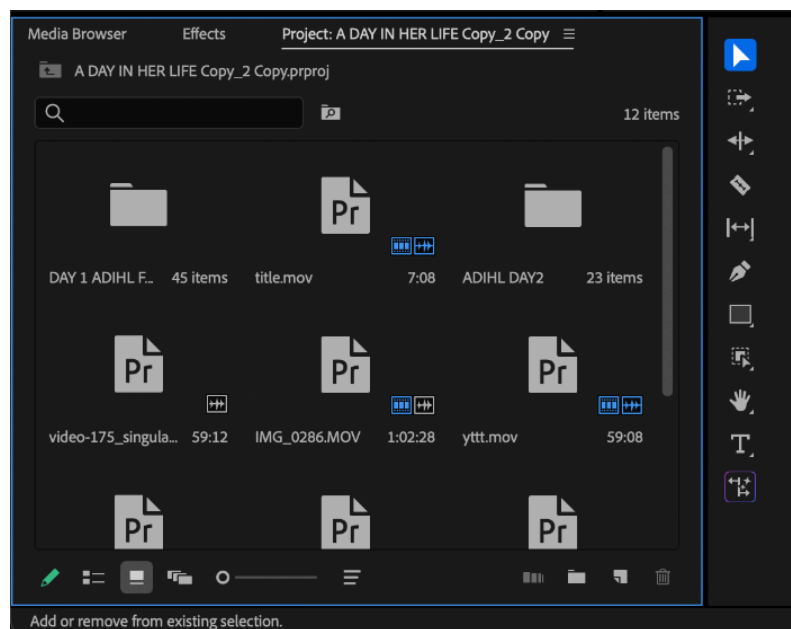
Timing

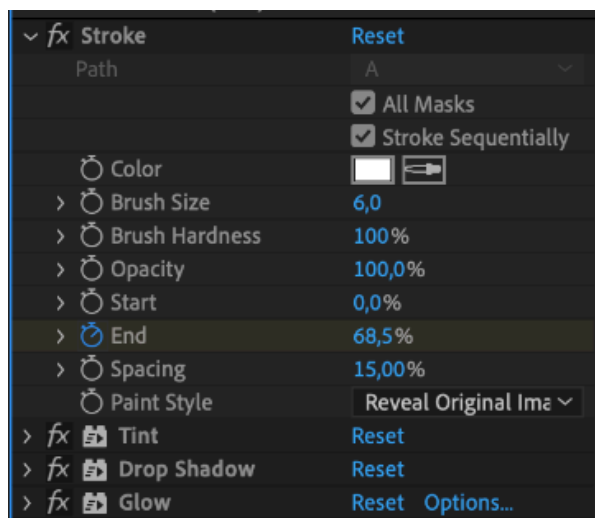
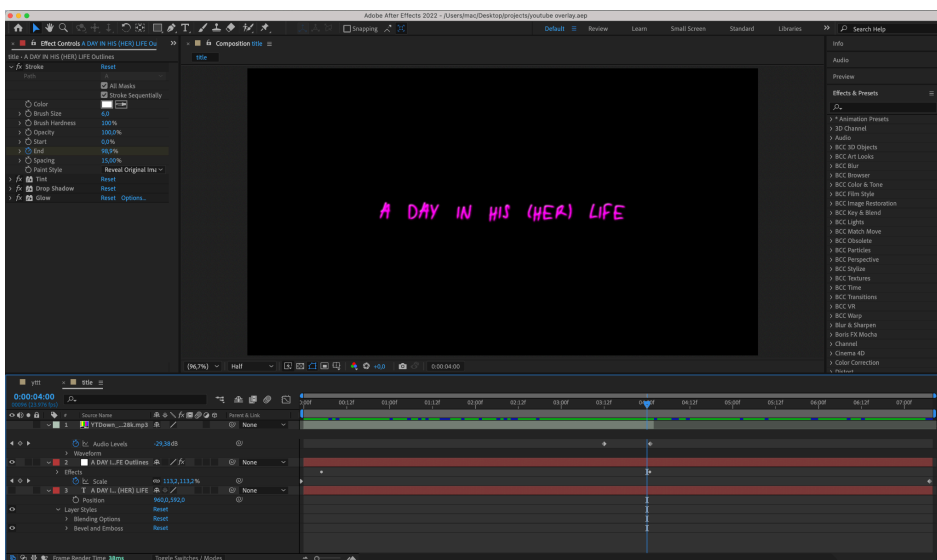
Since multiple actors were on a tight schedule, the director and assistant director decided to create a call sheet for them to keep up with the time. The shoot was divided into two days. Unfortunately, we realized early on during the first day that there would be some timing related issues. For one, we took more than expected to set up all of the necessary equipment and charge the batteries. Whilst conducting the interviews, the assistant director told everyone that we were already running an hour late. We started filming outside two hours later than we planned, but on the upside, the shoot in Warschauer Straße took shorter than expected. As we returned, we shot the Späti scene late too, since one of our actors hadn't arrived in time. Overall, it took us about seven and a half hours. On the second day, we started with the staircase scene and the fight scene, which all ran smoothly. It took about an hour, due to the fact that we wanted to have multiple alternative takes to pick from. Once that was done, we only had the car scene left. It started raining heavily right before we rented it, so it took a little longer than expected. That's when we officially finished filming.

Post-production

Softwares and the individual editing process

The softwares I used for the editing were Premiere Pro and After Effects. My task was to decide which clips to trim (PP), add an overlay (AE) and create a title (AE). I started off by trimming the clips in a way I liked. Then, to create the youtube overlay, I screen recorded the youtube page, created a mask and layered our protagonist being recorded on top of it. Lastly, to make the title, I used an effect called: “Stroke”, created masks from the text and inserted keyframes to show the text appearing from the left to the right.





Audio related issues

As I was editing, I noticed major inconsistencies within the audio, especially when the dialogues were playing. The problem seemed to appear because our recorded audios all had a vastly different level of volume. The zoom from the arsenal started to falter during our first day of recording, which is most likely why the audio tracks were drastically diverse. Other than that, the Rode microphone began exhibiting technical errors halfway through the interview, which is why we switched to lavaliers. Additionally, after we were done filming, we came to the realisation that our SD card where the sound was stored was gone. Regardless, we still managed it well given the circumstances and decided to use the audio from the camera for some of the footage, which sounded well after denoising.

Conclusion

Due to the fact that we faced multiple technical and time-related limitations during the production process, the journey to make this project happen wasn't the easiest. However, simultaneously, it was an incredible opportunity for me to practice not just my editing skills, but it also granted me the chance to help the director develop the plot, guide the actors through the course of the scenes, practice my character building skills and warm up to working on set, which I was skeptical about before. Even though our team faced several challenges during the development of this project, I couldn't be prouder to be a part of it.

Declaration of originality

I hereby confirm that I produced the work assigned to me independently and that I have not ever submitted it in any other course.

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'NP', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Date: _____ 06/07/2026 _____