

**MAKING FILM INDEPENDENTLY:
CREATING A SHORT FILM**

by

WHITNEY PETERSON

A THESIS

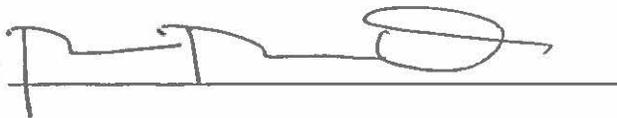
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Priscilla Peña Ovalle

In an effort to improve my filmmaking abilities, I used this thesis to create my first independent film project. My thesis begins with detailing the steps I took in creating this film, starting with the writing of my screenplay and the researching of topics relevant to the subject of the script. Next, I examine the steps of pre-production in recruiting cast and crew, and preparing the script to be shot. Then, I explain parts of the filming process and a few of the error I made while on set. Subsequently, I talk about the editing and post-production of the film, and the challenges that brought. Finally, I discuss the “so, what?” of this project, and how this film has already and will affect me in my future career path of becoming a filmmaker. In conclusion, I outline what comes next for this film project. With this explanation of my project, I believe I have demonstrated the struggles it takes and the dedication needed to create a short film mostly by oneself.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Priscilla Ovalle, Professor Suzanne Clark, and Masami Kawai who were kind enough to serve on my defense committee. Thanks to Miriam Jordan for all of your support. Thank you Masami for teaching me what really makes a film and a script good, and pushing me to make a short film instead of a music video. Thank you Professor Ovalle, for examining all the options and being realistic about my schedules and plans, when I sometimes reached a little too high or took on a bit too much. Thank you to these great women whose sage advice kept pushing me to prioritize making this film the best I could.

I would like to thank André Sirois for teaching the most fun and most relevant classes of my college experience, in which I actually got to make films with other talented students. To my cast and crew, my peers, who helped out on this film without hesitation, even with their own busy schedules, I could not have made this film without you. Tanner, I really owe you a cupcake. Sara, thank you for being a voice of reason and my extra arms. Audre, thank you for being so encouraging and trying to make everything I wanted possible. Thanks to all my other friends for believing in me and being excited to see this thing I made.

And of course, thanks to my family; to my sister, my best friend in the whole world, for whom this film is written. To my parents for always encouraging my creative aspirations and always supporting me in my dreams, and (almost) never saying no. Thank you for being a constant strength, even though I was very bad about calling you to talk very often. Your love and pride in me means more than I say. Thank you all.

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1. DVD copy of current cut of short film as of 6/3/16

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Introduction

The Project

The way to improve at anything is to practice, and the way to improve at filmmaking is to make films. I want to make films because I've been fascinated by the medium for a long time, beginning as an avid viewer of both movies and TV, and then as someone desiring to help create them. So far in my life I have only been a participant in aiding others to create their visions, and have never attempted to make my own. This longing to merge my imagined stories into a script and then into a film has burned for years, but my lack of experience and knowledge of how to make films has held me back from pursuing my dream.

Though the Cinema Studies program has taught me many things about film, the major has a greater emphasis on critical film studies, rather than film production, which makes it difficult for someone like me who is more interested in making films rather than studying them. But through the production classes I took, especially CINE 425 No Budget Filmmaking, I learned both theories and techniques of filmmaking, and am now equipped with the competence to make my own short film.

This project was a perfect way to wrap up my education at the University of Oregon as it combines both my fields of study: Creative Writing (my minor) and Cinema Studies (my major). I find that the artistic medium of film is the closest way we can emulate the experience of reality, as it engages visual and auditory elements, whereas prose relies entirely on the written word to stimulate the imagination. Film is

an art form that depends on creative and practical skills in all areas, that work together to create an experience like no other medium.

This short film was made almost entirely on my own, with the help of other students during the pre-production, production, and post-production stages. At the end of this mission, I have been a writer, director, producer, cinematographer, editor, and production designer. This film is solely my vision and my direction, and the peers that aided me in its production were there to help make sure my vision was clear.

By making this film, from development all the way to post production, I learned valuable lessons from the mistakes I made and the multiple tasks I took on at once. Because of the many hats I wore for this film, and the tiny crew that helped make the film, certain important aspects of the process didn't get the attention they deserved. The lessons I learned during the creation of this film are ones that are difficult to fathom before taking on such a project, and the errors that I made will help me steer away from them in future projects.

Approach

Script Writing

To begin my writing process I came up with four ideas, keeping in mind to make them simple with a strong ending. These ideas were of varying strengths, but the one that kept my attention more than the others was the idea involving a young witch who owns a tea shop that belonged to her recently deceased mother. Growing up with Harry Potter and many other stories involving magic, I've always tried to include some element of magic in my writing.

But there was something missing from the piece. I wasn't connecting to the story the way I needed to. I had to find my truth. That was when I knew I should write about sisters, as my sister is one of the most important people in my life. I know that I will always have the love of my sister. So, my next step was to revise the idea to include a sister relationship. The story then became one about two sisters whose mother had passed away recently and left them her tea shop, which they struggled to keep open. The older sister had moved away and was barely involved in the business, while the younger sister stayed to run it. I kept the witch theme: the older sister inherited magic, while the younger sister had not and was jealous.

From this idea, I was able to evolve the story into the final product. The story of my film is about a young woman, Olivia, whose sister, Maggie, returns home in the wake of their mother's death in order to reconnect with Olivia. But Maggie brings home an unexpected fiancé and a desire to move on from the life and legacy Olivia and Maggie shared with their mother, which is witchcraft. Hurt that Maggie is rejecting her magical birthright and struggling with the lifelong inadequacy of not having magic, Olivia seeks to obtain magic for herself to preserve their heritage in a way that could destroy everything she holds dear. The themes that my film explores are insecurity, grief, sisterly bonds, and friendship. However, I had difficulty making sure I explained all the history and specifics about the sisters and their magic, since *I* knew what I was talking about, I forgot to make sure someone coming in blind understood. Thus, it took me till the editing stage to realize that the film's magic comes out of nowhere and it is not explained why the stakes are so high for Olivia.

By the end of fall term, when I needed to finalize the script and begin pre-production, I had made many changes and the story had become quite complex. Because the script was more complicated, I tried to focus on what I thought was the heart: the sisters' relationship. Unfortunately, that caused me to neglect the importance of magic in the story. If I'd allocated more time to get outside feedback on the script and make further revisions, the story would have been in a better place when production began and wouldn't need to be fixed in post-production.

Audience

The intended audience for this film is mainly younger women, from teens to 30s, who share the troubles of relationships between sisters or female friends. I'm addressing this particular audience because I include myself in this group; this film is something I would enjoy, and that my friends and other women my age might appreciate too. I find myself too often disappointed by the selection of films in the box office, or even being made by my peers, because they exclude female viewers. I plan to always make creative projects, film or otherwise, that include complex and diverse female characters who face a variety of struggles and personal development.

Artistic Influences

There is a fantastical element to my story; I like bringing something unusual and mystical to the everyday in my creative writing. I wanted to make a film about witches in particular because to me, they seem a lesser explored subject within film and television, with the typical 'supernatural' or 'paranormal' subjects being vampires, werewolves, and zombies. Witches tend to appear as side companions in television

shows such as *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-) or *True Blood* (2008-2014), and are not often the central plot point (Predmore). However, in the last few years we have seen an emergence of television shows revolving around witches such as *The Secret Circle* (2011-2012), *Salem* (2014-), *Witches of East End* (2013-2014), and *American Horror Story: Coven* (2011-) (Taylor). In these more recent portrayals, the witches typically find themselves battling extreme perils and demons. What I want to do with my film is show a simpler side of witchcraft; an ordinary witch dealing with problems that non-magic people experience too, more like *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (1996-2003). Unlike *Sabrina*, which is light-hearted and shows a normal girl learning how to use magic and the consequences that go along with it, my story has a darker tone and style.

Practical Magic (1998) helped me in the development of my story, as it shares many of the characteristics of my story: two sister witches, one with more magical skill than the other, who are reconnecting after a long separation. The witches in this film are ‘good witches’ who do more normal magic, though they do contend with evil after resurrecting a dead man. This film has influenced the visual images of my witches and their home, as well as the difficulties that arise in relationships between sisters.

Once I had the idea for the film set, I was able to create a look-book, which is a compilation of images a director uses to create a look and feel for the film. The look-book includes lighting, props, costumes, colors, and more. For mine, I created a tumblr blog where I posted pictures that inspired me. Attached are examples of some of the images I collected. Though I was limited by budget and what I could actually find for props and costumes, I was able to keep to my look book. I allocated a large portion of the budget (money raised through a GoFundMe fundraising webpage) to devote to

way into their ranks (Blum). Since I wish to become a director of photographer, I personally shot my film to address the inequality of the position within the industry. Of the characters in my film, only one is male, the rest are female. I was happy to get a majority of fellow female film students on my crew and give them their preferred filmmaking position, such as producer, first assistant director, or camera assistant.

My production crew was quite small, with a total of 13 people helping in different capacities, averaging four crew members on set at once. The position that was the most challenging to fill was sound recordist, which resulted in six different crew members running sound throughout the film shoot. This was because I was unable to find a peer who was both familiar with the equipment and technique of sound recording, and had the time to be on set for the entire shoot time. To resolve this issue, each recordist came in for a certain amount of time, and then would leave and be replaced with a different recordist. This difficulty may have affected the quality of sound in some scenes, and an overall variation in tone throughout the film.

The crew members that were the most crucial to the production were my producer, Audre Pile, my assistant director, Sara Coleman, and my co-editor, Tanner Staab. Audre helped with organizing the overall shooting schedule, getting the location, and contacting the crew. Sara helped with creating each day's shooting schedule, helped me direct the set while I was behind camera, ran the slate, and filled in for the other crew positions when it was just me and her shooting. Because both Sara and I had so many jobs during the production at different times we couldn't focus on important jobs like scene coverage and script continuity. With such a small crew and different people coming and going, it would have been a good idea to have a second producer or

assistant director to help me and Sara handle all the tasks we had to do while on set, and to catch the important things Sara and I would drop because we were juggling too many jobs.

In preparation for this film, I took a lighting workshop through the Journalism School with a professional filmmaker Leonard Henderson. The two day workshop taught me how to do basic 3-point lighting correctly, and how to set up lighting and camera for an interview. Though the workshop didn't explain narrative lighting techniques, knowing the basics allowed me to experiment with the lighting on my own.

This film was shot on a Sony a7S II, using both Rokinon Cine lenses and two Zeiss Loxia lenses. I rented the camera and the Zeiss lenses from LensRentals.com and the rest of the equipment was borrowed through the Cinema Studies Equipment Lab. At the moment, I do not have my own camera equipment to shoot high quality films, so renting equipment was absolutely necessary, especially for lighting and audio equipment. I decided to rent a camera from LensRentals.com instead of using one from the Cinema Studies Equipment Lab because I was interested in purchasing the Sony a7S II after hearing about its great low light capabilities. That specific aspect of the camera was a real benefit to shooting the graveyard scenes at night. However, since I rented the camera from an outside source, I had to pay to rent the equipment, which made doing pick up shots very unlikely. That meant I had to use only the footage we shot in the 3 days of shooting, which I realized was not everything I needed or wanted during post-production.

Pre-Production

Pre-production involved finding cast, crew, location, and props. I hoped to shoot at a local bed and breakfast because the sisters in my script live in their family home passed down from their mother. I imagined a large, vintage style home when I wrote the script, and I hoped to find a house similar to what I imagined. After calling around to a couple of places, my first choice, the C'est La Vie Inn, graciously allowed us to shoot in their gorgeous Queen Anne style home which was built in the late 1800s, and decorated by the patrons in 1930s Art Deco style. Jack, the owner of the establishment, was extremely accommodating, allowing us to film wherever we needed, and even into the night. Because of his generosity and flexibility, we were able to shoot the film over three days.

I acquired all props for the film and approved costumes which were provided by the actors. Props used the majority of the budget I collected for the film. All witch-y objects and artifacts were found on Etsy.com, Amazon.com, and in my family's rock collection. I hand-bound the witch spell book for the film, using real leather for the cover. I also attempted a real layout of spells, potions, herbs, gems, and terminology that a witch would use in her practice.

While working on the physical details of the film, I also needed to prepare the script for filming by performing a script break down and shot lists for the scenes. That work can be seen in the following pages. The shot lists that I made ended up not having enough of the coverage that I needed to use during editing, even though we shot 80-100% of the list during production. It would have helped if I was the one keeping track

of the shot lists, rather than Sara; that way I might have noticed more we weren't getting all the coverage needed.

With pre-production, if I had started recruiting crew earlier in the year I may have had more luck finding a sound recordist who could dedicate the time to be on set the entire time, and also be able to find more production assistants and other people who could fill in times when specific crew was busy. It would have been a good idea as well to schedule more production days so we had time to get proper coverage and plenty of takes without rushing through the scenes to stay on schedule. However, multiple factors made that impossible for us to execute at the time: the camera rental period, cast and crews schedules, and the bed and breakfast's availability.

Production

As stated, the film was shot over three days. The bulk of shooting was the first day, Saturday February 26th, in which we went from 7 AM – 12PM, with a lunch break and a dinner break. On Sunday we just shot in the evening, and Tuesday was split between the morning and late night. Thankfully, there were only two locations to manage, as the graveyard only had two scenes we that “knocked out” (concluding shooting) on Tuesday night.

Challenges with Shooting

Shooting began a little rocky as we started with a practically difficult scene in a tight location: the kitchen scene. We spent quite a while on that scene trying to get all the shots needed, and did many takes per shot. In future, I will start shooting with smaller, simpler scenes in order to gauge shooting time and build momentum into

scenes that are more complicated both practically or emotionally. Since our time was so limited so we could stay on schedule, we ended up not getting as much coverage of the scene as I then wanted when editing. Another error in this scene was I was unable follow the *30 degree rule* due to the limited space. This rule states that “a shift in camera angle between successive shots of the same subject should exceed 30 degrees” to avoid a jump cut and drawing the audience’s attention away from the narrative, the “first principal of filmmaking” (Hollywood Lexicon). Unfortunately, this flaw in my filming coverage occurred in quite a few scenes, such as the final graveyard scene, in which I only got a wide 2-shot and a medium 2-shot of the first half of the conversation.

However, I am guilty of committing a worse crime: breaking the 180 degree rule in the second scene where Maggie and August arrive home. The 180 degree rule states “that two characters...in the same scene should always have the same left/right relationship to each other” (Rea 1995). In the scene, I have shots of Olivia on the left side of frame, looking right (at Maggie), and I have shots of Maggie (and August) also looking right (at Olivia). On set, I was specific about how I wanted Olivia nearer to Maggie in the frame, rather than be nearer to August; narratively, Olivia is instantly wary of August, and emotionally closer to Maggie. But, because of how I blocked the characters, this confused the rule in my head, and I mixed up which side of the characters the camera needed to be on. It would have helped if during pre-production I had made floor plans and storyboards for every scene, but because of my limited time I did not do them. Having floorplans and storyboards would likely have solved both my issues with the degree rules and the insufficient coverage.

Successes of Production

Some of my favorite scenes to shoot were the graveyard scenes, which I was very excited about, since I rented the Sony a7s II camera specifically for its low-light capabilities. With the use of the Rokinon lenses, these shots turned out beautiful, and are some of my favorites in the film. The props also looked awesome, especially the 'magic' spell paper (which burned slowly with some crackling sparks) that I bought specifically to use for this scene.

Another success of the film was my attempt to show magic using practical effects. For example, the grape scene was very entertaining for actors and crew as the two actresses, Gretchen and Ashley, threw grapes back and forth at each other's faces. The magic during the kitchen scene was harder to achieve, as spilling a ceramic cup is not an easy feat. I tried using clear jewelry string, but the cup was too heavy, and the string couldn't create the right angle to tip the mug over. Instead I had someone hit the mug with a wooden spoon and just cropped the spoon out in post. The magic spell book was also a challenge, in terms of continuity. We used a hairdryer to make the pages look like they were flipping on their own. However because it was just me (directing and shooting), Gretchen (acting), and Sara (recording audio, running the hair dryer, and reflecting light) during this scene, we did not pay close attention to which pages were open at what lines of dialogue.

In future, I now will never make the mistake of breaking the 180 and 30 degree rule. I also realize the importance of coverage, which means I can't just shoot a scene with a wide shot and a medium close-up for each character. These lessons are crucial for me as I learn to be a director of photography.

Post-Production

To state it plainly, editing was the most challenging part of this film for me. I originally decided to recruit another editor to help me with the process, as I was quite rusty with my editing skills. Editing was a collaborative process, but the important decisions on flow and story were all made by me. I thought having another pair of hands on the footage was a good time management idea, but having a co-editor allowed me to put off the accountability of the film instead of working on the project diligently.

I was not as involved as I should have been in the initial editing process. Because of that, there was an oversight that created the biggest delay in the process. We did not sync the audio with the footage before the editing of the cut began. So, when we were mostly done with the assembly edit and the audio had still not been synced, we had to go back through the whole film and replace the audio recorded on the camera with the audio recorded on the boom. The work was tedious, pain-staking, and tiresome, which made working on the film very unappealing. This kept the editing process from moving forward for a few weeks, not from the difficulty of the task, but due to my reluctance to work on the task, and my co-editor's busy schedule. The advice I would give myself for the future, would be to *always, always, always sync the audio before editing*. The second piece of advice I would give would be: just do it, even if it's a little bit, just do something.

There was at least one thing that made the post-production better: the music. I approached a musician friend of mine about scoring my film and he was very excited about it. The music I told him that I liked and wanted to inspire the score were some selections from The Civil Wars, Florence + the Machine, Fleetwood Mac, and the

theme suite from the movie *Beginners* (2010). The music he gave me is excellent and it makes the whole filmmaking process more special. Unfortunately, I was too eager for the music; instead of waiting for an edit of the film that he could score to and find the emotional beats, I had him do a suite of music that I could cut up and place in the film in chunks. My next step is to have an official score done to the completed edit.

So What?

After completing this film, I can say the set-backs and the mistakes I made were as helpful as learning experience as the bits that went well. There are mistakes I made that I will never ever do again (breaking the 30° and 180° rules), and things I will need to pay more attention to and plan more thoroughly (proper coverage, and crew equipment in shots). Even though making this film was a pain at some points, and a mountain of anxiety at others, I have not been discouraged from my dream of filmmaking. Having this one film under my belt is a confidence booster, and now I know I really *can* make a film. I know the satisfaction of seeing my story come to life on screen, and I know the hardest part of getting the film done is the self-accountability. I've learned so much through this project, and have come out of it, a little frazzled and in need of a good long sleep, but proud of myself for what I made.

What's Next?

The film still has a lot of work to be done to really perfect it. I will continue to refine the edit to make the story shine; I may do pick up shots or voice over to make up for some parts lacking in the script or missed during shooting. Once the cut is finalized

and locked, I will color correct the film and send it to my composer for a real score.

After that, I may try to enter it in film festivals.

Filmmaking is a really arduous process. To create something that is really stellar, by editing in a single term whilst finishing up my classes was maybe too ambitious on my part. Filmmaking takes real care and time to make something great; because I took on so many jobs of this film, I wasn't able to devote all my attention to each task. I now realize why professional sets have only one person in each position, because in any project larger than mine, holding more than one position on set would be impossible. So in my future projects, I will try and limit the number of jobs I do, and instead explore different jobs in different projects.

After this project, becoming a director of photography is still my top career goal, but I'm also glad I practiced doing certain jobs that I am also interested in, such as screenwriter and art director/production designer. I really enjoyed doing those jobs, and though I had different levels of success at them, I want to keep developing my skills in those areas.

1 INT. VEGA HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

A variety of plants, flowers, and herbs decorates the large, open foyer of the Vega House. The overstuffed furniture belongs in a bygone era, but the young woman sitting on a couch, looking at her smart phone betrays the illusion. A cat, HECATE, sits on an elegant armchair.

OLIVIA (22), breezy and bohemian, sees there is no text or missed call on her phone, and puts it aside. She readjusts herself on the couch, leaning against the armrest and holding up her head. A pose of unconvincing patience.

She looks at the ornate clock above the fireplace; the hands tick too slow. Agitated, she stands and begins to pace. The grandfather clock in the adjacent dining room tocks loudly out of time. Olivia glances out the window, but there is noone. She drops back down in a chair just as we hear a car park outside.

Olivia jumps up immediately, and hurries out of the front door.

2 EXT. VEGA HOUSE FRONT YARD - DAY

MAGGIE (20), sharp and sophisticated, steps out of the vehicle. At the sight of her sister coming down the front steps, her face lights up in a large smile. She hurries to meet her.

The sisters stop at the fence and are too eager to hug for either to step to the other side. They awkwardly sandwich the gate between themselves.

MAGGIE

Liv! It feels like it's been forever. I missed you so much.

OLIVIA

Well it has been a year since we saw each other.

The two sisters continue to hug and Olivia sees someone else get out of the car. AUGUST, 20, tall, good-natured, and carrying too many bags, staggers over to them. Olivia releases Maggie and stands back as August sidles up next to her. The gate is a very obvious barrier between August and Maggie, and Olivia.

MAGGIE

Liv, this is August.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

2.

AUGUST

Hi, it's great to finally meet you,
Maggie talks about you all the
time.

OLIVIA

Really? Maggie never... I didn't
know she was in a relationship.

August and Maggie exchange a meaningful look.

MAGGIE

I'm sure I must have mentioned it.
Is it alright if he stays?

Olivia hesitates, giving the situation a once over. This was
not what she expecting at all, but it's not like she can
just send away Maggie's boyfriend.

OLIVIA

Of course. He can stay.

August glances at Maggie, giving her a small relieved smile.
Olivia turns away and Maggie and August follow her through
the gate which squeaks closed.

3

INT. VEGA HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie and Olivia sit at the dining table. Olivia eats
purple grapes, Maggie reads at the newspaper.

MAGGIE

So how have things been here?

OLIVIA

Same as always. My jobs suck but
they're to keep from losing the
house.

Maggie looks up.

MAGGIE

Have you tried looking for other
jobs? Better paying? More
satisfying?

OLIVIA

You know there's not such thing
here. To find anything beyond
barista and grocery checker is a
miracle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

3.

MAGGIE

You know I send what I can. It's not much but it's all I can spare.

OLIVIA

(Saddened)

I know.

There is a tense silence.

OLIVIA

So how are things with you?

MAGGIE

Really good! I think people are finally starting to notice the hard work I've been doing at the office. And things with August--

A grape hits Maggie in the face. Olivia eats another. Maggie looks amused but annoyed.

MAGGIE

What was that for?

OLIVIA

What do you mean?

She throws another grape at Maggie and smiles.

MAGGIE

(teasing)

Stop it!

OLIVIA

We both know you could easily deflect them if you wanted to.

MAGGIE

Or you could just stop.

Olivia throws another grape at Maggie, but before it collides, she brings up her hand and the grape sails back at Olivia, who laughs. She is about to throw another when August walks in. Olivia's face turns stony.

AUGUST

You guys having fun?

MAGGIE

Oh, Olivia's just being a pest.

As August sits down next to Maggie, Olivia gets up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

4.

OLIVIA
I'm going to bed.

Olivia exits through the living room.

AUGUST
(to Maggie)
Did you tell her yet?

4 INT. VEGA HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

THE NEXT DAY.

Olivia takes a whistling tea pot off the stove. Two mugs are set with tea bags in them. She pours in the boiling water as someone walks into the room. She turns, thinking it is Olivia, but it is August.

AUGUST
Good Morning!

OLIVIA
Morning.

AUGUST
Did you make tea?

OLIVIA
Yes. Do you want a cup?

AUGUST
I would love one.

Olivia pulls another mug from a cupboard. August moves over to pet Hecate who sits regally in the corner.

OLIVIA
Herbal?

AUGUST
Sounds great!

Olivia puts in a bag and pours the water. An idea pops into Olivia's head, and she reaches for a bottle in one of the drawers. She is about to dump the whole vial in August's mug when Maggie walks in. Seeing Olivia, she waves her hand and the mug tips over, spilling the tea across the counter.

MAGGIE
Oh no!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

5.

OLIVIA
I'll make another.

AUGUST
No that's okay, Olivia. You don't
have to.

Maggie grabs her own uncontaminated cup and gives it to August.

MAGGIE
Here hon, have mine.

Olivia mops up the spilled tea with a dish towel as Maggie moves next to her and whispers in her ear.

MAGGIE
Calamus root, Liv? That'll make him
sick.

Maggie exits the kitchen with August. There is a knowing look on Olivia's face. She wrings the towel out in the sink. The dark droplets blemish the stark white.

5 EXT. GRAVEYARD - SUNSET

LATER.

Candles drip wax onto the ground next to a headstone. Flowers, mostly dead lay next to a photo of a beautiful middle-aged woman, SELENA VEGA.

Olivia and Maggie, both dressed in all white, stand over their mother's grave.

MAGGIE
Do you remember how to do this?

OLIVIA
Of course I remember.

Maggie holds out her gloved hands.

MAGGIE
We hold hands right?

OLIVIA
Our bare hands.

They both strip their gloves and join hands. Olivia closes her eyes, and Maggie copies her. Neither of them speak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

6.

MAGGIE
What do I say again?

OLIVIA
(sighs)
Divine Goddess, we humble mortals
beseech you...

MAGGIE
Divine Goddess, we humble mortals
beseech you to hear us. Watch over
our dear mother who re-entered your
embrace. Keep her immortal soul at
peace, and awake in the wind and
the candle light.

At her words, the candles' flames grow gently. The wind
ruffles the girls' hair and they open their eyes.

OLIVIA
Good Job.

MAGGIE
I need to tell you something Liv.
About August.

OLIVIA
Yeah, you have a boyfriend you
didn't tell me about. It's not that
big of a deal.

Olivia, turns away from her sister and pulls on her gloves.

MAGGIE
No, he's not just my boyfriend.
He's my fiance.

Olivia stills, listening to her sister and turns back to
face her.

MAGGIE
We're going to get married in
April, and we want to live in the
city, not out here...

OLIVIA
April? That's a pretty quick turn
around.

MAGGIE
We've been together for a year and
a half.

Olivia starts at this information.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

7.

OLIVIA

Over a year? So the last time we met-

MAGGIE

I was going to tell you sooner but...

OLIVIA

But you're so young! Why get married now?

MAGGIE

Come on, people get married at my age all the time.

OLIVIA

He looks like he's 12.

MAGGIE

Well he's obviously not. Be serious, Liv.

OLIVIA

Does he know?

MAGGIE

Know what?

OLIVIA

About your magic?

MAGGIE

No, it's not important anyways.

OLIVIA

(hurt)

Not important?

MAGGIE

That's not what I meant...I never use it. Our life is pretty normal.

Olivia stalks off, leaving Maggie in the darkness and candlelight. Maggie waves her hand and the candles extinguish.

6 INT. VEGA HOUSE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

MAGGIE

Olivia!

Olivia SLAMS the door to her bedroom, leaving Maggie in the hallway. AUGUST emerges from Maggie's room.

AUGUST

She didn't take it well?

7 INT. OLIVIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Olivia lays spread eagle on her bed, watching the ceiling fan spin. She appears very small alone in her room. She rolls over and see the picture on her side table. She grabs it, holds it close. Tears threaten in her eye.

In a fit of frustrated anger, she pushes the picture face down into her bedspread as she sits up.

8 INT. VEGA HOUSE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Olivia tiptoes down the hallway towards Maggie's slightly ajar door. The voices inside get clearer as she gets closer.

9 INT. MAGGIE ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie lounges on the bed reading a newspaper while August paces the room.

AUGUST

How do u think things with Olivia are going? Am I making any progress?

Maggie frowns back in response. August sighs defeatedly.

AUGUST

I don't know what I can do. She's your sister. Your only family left. I couldn't stand if she still hates me when we're married.

MAGGIE

Liv is stubborn. She she loves me I know she'll come around.

AUGUST

But there's only so much time until the wedding and then when will we get the time to get back out here to see her.

10 INT. VEGA HOUSE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Olivia listens at the door, she looks concerned at what she hears.

MAGGIE [OFF SCREEN]

I don't know. Maybe she'll have to
come visit us in the city...

Olivia's heard enough, and she goes back to her room.

11 INT. OLIVIA'S ROOM - DAY

The next morning.

SERIES OF IMAGES

1. Olivia opens her eyes.
2. She opens the grimoire, flips through pages.
3. Olivia opens her trunk, digging around looking for crystals, candles, herbs, bones, and other ingredients.
4. She flips through some more pages.

BACK TO SCENE

Olivia sits in the middle of a white pentagram on the floor, different magical specimens around the points and candle all over the room.

HECATE the cat sits on the desk with the grimoire, watching her.

OLIVIA

This is never going to work.

She gets up and goes to the book and speaks to it.

OLIVIA

I need a spell that will actually
give me magic.

The pages of the book flip to a page. Olivia GROWLS in frustration.

OLIVIA

I've seen all these already!

The book flips to another page. Olivia shoves the book off the desk in anger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

10.

OLIVIA

You think I haven't tried all of these already? Give me a spell that will work no matter what.

The book hesitates they starts to flutter maddeningly and opens to a blank page. Ink soaks into the page from nothing, creating words. The writing looks sinister and reads "Soul Stealing" at the top. Olivia kneels down to look closely. A conflicted look passes her face.

OLIVIA

If I have no other choice...

12 INT. VEGA HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

August sits at the grand piano. He presses keys with his pointer finger. He has obviously never played the instrument before. Maggie is nowhere to be seen.

Olivia comes in from the dining room. She leans against the door jam, lost in thought.

OLIVIA

(still not looking at August)
Have you seen Maggie?

August jumps, having not heard her enter the room.

AUGUST

She went for a walk. Said she wanted to be alone. Think she'll be back in an hour or so. Hopefully.

Olivia looks over at August with a blank expression.

OLIVIA

Good.

13 INT. VEGA HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie arrives home, taking off her scarf and hanging it on the stair post. The house is oddly quiet.

MAGGIE

I'm home!

Her voice echos through the empty house to no response. She looks into the parlor and the dining room and finds no August and no Olivia.

14 INT. VEGA HOUSE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Maggie climbs the stairs to the second floor.

MAGGIE
Olivia? August?

She glances in her room before moving to Olivia's.

15 INT. OLIVIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

MAGGIE
Olivia? Are you here?

Maggie looks in, slightly concerned. Olivia's mess of magical items litter the floor. Maggie bends down and shifts them before moving to the herbs. She picks through the bottles, noticing some missing. Maggie's face turns from slightly concerned to alarmed.

She looks through a pile of books for the grimoire, but it is gone.

MAGGIE
Where is it? Liv what are you doing?

Maggie rushes out of the room.

16 EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Olivia stands over their mother's grave where she stood the night before. A cauldron sits in front of her and all the candles are lit. The full moon shines between the trees casting strange shadows on the scene.

Maggie runs out from between the tree trunks, frantic.

MAGGIE
Olivia, stop! Don't do this.

OLIVIA
Stay back!

Olivia holds a slip of paper with a scrawl of writing on it over the fire.

MAGGIE
What's going on? What have you done with August?

Olivia hesitates confused.

(CONTINUED)

OLIVIA

What are you talking about?

MAGGIE

I know you tried to make him sick the other day. Are you trying curse him or...I don't know!

OLIVIA

What, do you think I would really hurt August like that? Curse him?

MAGGIE

I don't know, maybe? I don't know what you're capable of anymore.

OLIVIA

And whose fault is that? Maybe if you were here, you would know that I'd never push you away like that.

The fight fades out of Maggie. She moves in next to Olivia and sees the grimoire.

MAGGIE

Soul stealing? Liv-- what are you--

Olivia lights the slip of paper, which shoots sparks. She takes some ingredients and tosses them into the smoking cauldron without making eye contact with Maggie. Meanwhile, Maggie is putting things together quickly.

MAGGIE

(Horrorified)

No...not Mom, Liv.

OLIVIA

(Trying to stay composed)

She's not using her magic now is she? Why shouldn't I make use of it?

MAGGIE

But to steal her magic from the afterlife would destroy her soul for the rest of eternity. How can you do that to her?

OLIVIA

(Holding back tears)

It's all I have left! You're leaving, and who knows when we'll see each other again? Every once a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OLIVIA (cont'd)
year for her memorial? Less than that? I'll be all alone, for good this time. But With magic, at least I can feel like Mom is still with me.

MAGGIE
She *is* always with you. You don't need magic to feel that.

OLIVIA
But why are you leaving me?

MAGGIE
I'm not leaving you. It's this town. There's nothing for me here, or you! The house? Maybe, but we can hardly afford it, even with the inheritance Mom left. You're miserable here.

Olivia has no response.

MAGGIE
Come with us. Come live in the city. Find what you really want to do.

OLIVIA
But--

MAGGIE
Magic isn't really what you want is it? It's about me isn't it.

Olivia looks nearly destroyed. She nods.

Maggie takes Olivia in her arms.

MAGGIE
I'm not going to abandon you Liv. Not anymore. I'm so sorry.

At her words the cauldron extinguishes as do the candles. The sister's continue to hug.

MAGGIE
Liv, where's August?

17 EXT. VEGA PORCH - NIGHT

August sits on the porch of the house, locked out, with a giant bag of cat food.

Olivia and Maggie come out of the darkness into the light of the porch steps. They hold hands.

Olivia gives August a small smile and takes the cat food from him.

Together they all step inside. The door closes.

THE END.

BREAKDOWN SHEET # 1

Page Count: 4/8 pages

Date: 2/26

Production Company: FML Productions

Production Title: Sisters

Scene #: 1 Name: Liv waits

INT/EXT: INT

DAY/NIGHT: Day

Description: Olivia waits for Maggie to arrive

CAST Olivia: Gretchen	STUNTS N/A	EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE N/A
	SET DRESSING N/A	
SPECIAL EFFECTS N/A	PROPS Phone, clocks	VEHICLES/ANIMALS Hecate – B&B cat
WARDROBE Black outfit #1	MAKEUP/HAIR Normal	SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC Clock ticking, car pulling up
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT N/A	PRODUCTION NOTES	

BREAKDOWN SHEET # 4

Page Count: 1 2/8 pages

Date: 2/26

Production Company: FML Productions

Production Title: Sisters

Scene #: 4 Name: Kitchen/Tea

INT/EXT: INT

DAY/NIGHT: Day

Description: Olivia makes tea for August and Maggie

CAST Olivia: Gretchen Maggie: Ashley August: Parker	STUNTS N/A SET DRESSING N/A	EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE
SPECIAL EFFECTS Knocks over tea cup with magic	PROPS Whistling teapot, 3 mugs, vial of herb, tea towel, tea bags, tea	VEHICLES/ANIMALS Hecate – B&B's cat
WARDROBE Black outfits #2 August outfit #2	MAKEUP/HAIR Normal	SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC Whistling tea pot
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT Gorilla tripod	PRODUCTION NOTES	

BREAKDOWN SHEET # 11

Page Count: 1 1/8 pages

Date: 2/26

Production Company: FML Productions

Production Title: Sisters

Scene #: 11 Name: Trying out spells

INT/EXT: INT

DAY/NIGHT: Day

Description: Olivia tries to get magic

CAST Olivia: Gretchen	STUNTS N/A SET DRESSING Pentagram on floor, candles, magic items on the points	EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE
SPECIAL EFFECTS Pages flip by themselves (hair dryer)	PROPS Crystals, candles, herbs, string for pentagram, other magical items, grimoire, pile of books	VEHICLES/ANIMALS Hecate
WARDROBE Black outfit #3	MAKEUP/HAIR Normal	SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC Page flipping
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT N/A	PRODUCTION NOTES NEED HAIR DRYER!!!!	

BREAKDOWN SHEET # 12

Page Count: 4/8 pages

Date: 2/26

Production Company: FML Productions

Production Title: Sisters

Scene #: 12 Name: Liv/August Piano

INT/EXT: INT

DAY/NIGHT: Day

Description: Olivia finds August at the Piano

CAST Olivia: Gretchen August: Parker	STUNTS N/A SET DRESSING N/A	EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE
SPECIAL EFFECTS	PROPS Piano (@ B&B)	VEHICLES/ANIMALS
WARDROBE Black outfit #3 August outfit #3	MAKEUP/HAIR Normal	SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC Piano key pressing
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT N/A	PRODUCTION NOTES	

BREAKDOWN SHEET # 13

Page Count: 2/8 pages

Date: 2/26

Production Company: FML Productions

Production Title: Sisters

Scene #: 13 **Name:** Maggie comes home

INT/EXT: INT

DAY/NIGHT: Night

Description: Maggie gets back from walk and finds house empty

CAST Maggie: Ashley	STUNTS N/A SET DRESSING N/A	EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE
SPECIAL EFFECTS	PROPS Scarf	VEHICLES/ANIMALS
WARDROBE Black outfit #3	MAKEUP/HAIR Normal	SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC Voice echoes in the house
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT N/A	PRODUCTION NOTES	

BREAKDOWN SHEET # 14

Page Count: 2/8 pages

Date: 2/26

Production Company: FML Productions

Production Title: Sisters

Scene #: 14 **Name:** Maggie looks for them **INT/EXT:** INT

DAY/NIGHT: Night

Description: Maggie goes up the stairs and can't find Olivia or August anywhere

CAST Maggie: Ashley	STUNTS N/A SET DRESSING N/A	EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE
SPECIAL EFFECTS	PROPS	VEHICLES/ANIMALS
WARDROBE Black outfit #3	MAKEUP/HAIR Normal	SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT N/A	PRODUCTION NOTES	

BREAKDOWN SHEET # 15

Page Count: 2/8 pages

Date: 2/26

Production Company: FML Productions

Production Title: Sisters

Scene #: 15 Name: Maggie comes home **INT/EXT:** INT

DAY/NIGHT: Night

Description: Maggie goes in olivia's room and sees the mess

CAST Maggie: Ashley	STUNTS N/A	EXTRAS/ATMOSPHERE
	SET DRESSING Magic items scattered around the room	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	PROPS Crystals, candles, herbs, string for pentagram, other magical items, pile of books	VEHICLES/ANIMALS
WARDROBE Black outfit #3	MAKEUP/HAIR Normal	SOUND EFFECTS/MUSIC
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT N/A	PRODUCTION NOTES	

Shot List: Scene 1

Scene	Distance	Angle	Action/Subject	Camera Movement	Lensing	Location
1	Master	3/4, towards couch	Olivia waiting for Maggie to arrive.	Pan around room, settles on Olivia, then static	Wide	Living Room
1a	Medium	Straight	Olivia checking her phone, sitting	None	Normal	Living Room
1b	Medium	¼, towards fireplace	Olivia pacing, looking out window	None	Normal	Living Room
1c	Medium	Straight	Cat on chair	None	Normal	Living Room
1d	Insert	Straight	Clock on mantle	None	Long	Living Room
1e	Insert	Straight	Grandfather clock	None	Wide	Dining Room

DISTANCE: ECU=Extreme close up; CU=Close up; MCU=Medium close up; MS=Medium shot; LS=Long Shot/Establishing Shot
ANGLE: Straight on; High; Low; Dutch (titled)
LENSING: Normal; Wide Angle; Telephoto
CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan; Tilt; Dolly; Static

Shot List: Scene 2

Scene	Distance	Angle	Action/Subject	Camera Movement	Lensing	Location
2	Master	Profile	Olivia greets Maggie and August	Follow Olivia down steps of house	Wide	Front Yard
2a	Medium	High	Maggie gets out of car	Tilt, follow	Normal	Front Yard
2b	MCU/OTS	Straight	Olivia	None	Long	Front Yard
2c	MCU/OTS	Straight	Maggie	None	Long	Front Yard
2d	MS 2shot	Straight	Maggie and August	None	Normal	Front Yard
2e	CU	Straight	Olivia	None	Long	Front Yard

DISTANCE: ECU=Extreme close up; CU=Close up; MCU=Medium close up; MS=Medium shot; LS=Long Shot/Establishing Shot
ANGLE: Straight on; High; Low; Dutch (titled)
LENSING: Normal; Wide Angle; Telephoto
CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan; Tilt; Dolly; Static

Shot List: Scene 3

Scene	Distance	Angle	Action/Subject	Camera Movement	Lensing	Location
3	Master	¾	Olivia and Maggie at the table	None	Wide	Dining Room
3a	MS	¾ from Maggie	Olivia	None	Normal	Dining Room
3b	MS	¾ from Olivia	Maggie	None	Normal	Dining Room
3c	MCU	From Maggie	Olivia	None	Long	Dining Room
3d	MCU	From Olivia	Maggie	None	Long	Dining Room
3e	CU	From Maggie	Olivia	None	Long	Dining Room
3f	CU	From Olivia	Maggie	None	Long	Dining Room
3g	Wide	From Olivia	August walks in; 2 shot with Maggie	None	Wide	Dining Room

DISTANCE: ECU=Extreme close up; CU=Close up; MCU=Medium close up; MS=Medium shot; LS=Long Shot/Establishing Shot
ANGLE: Straight on; High; Low; Dutch (titled)
LENSING: Normal; Wide Angle; Telephoto
CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan; Tilt; Dolly; Static

Production Title: Sisters	Date:	Page: 4-5
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Shot List: Scene 4

Scene	Distance	Angle	Action/Subject	Camera Movement	Lensing	Location
4	Master	Pointing @ entrance	Olivia makes tea, August and Maggie join	none	Widest	Kitchen
4a	MCU	Profile	Olivia Making tea	None	Long	Kitchen
4b	MS	Straight	August Talking, petting Hecate	None	Normal	Kitchen
4c	MS	Straight	Olivia talking to August	None	Normal	Kitchen
4d	MS	Straight	Maggie comes in	None	Normal	Kitchen
4e	MCU	Straight	2 shot: Maggie whispers to Liv	None	Normal	Kitchen
4f	Insert	Straight	Tea pot	None	Long	Kitchen
4g	Insert	Straight	Pouring into cups	None	Long	Kitchen
4h	Insert	Straight	Olivia grabbing Calamus root, going to put in cups	None	Normal	Kitchen
4j	Insert	Straight	Cup spilling	None	Normal	Kitchen
4k	Insert	High	Wringing Tea in sink	None	Normal	Kitchen

DISTANCE: ECU=Extreme close up; CU=Close up; MCU=Medium close up; MS=Medium shot; LS=Long Shot/Establishing Shot

ANGLE: Straight on; High; Low; Dutch (titled)

LENSING: Normal; Wide Angle; Telephoto

CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan; Tilt; Dolly; Static

Production Title: Sisters	Date:	Page: 5-7
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Shot List: Scene 5

Scene	Distance	Angle	Action/Subject	Camera Movement	Lensing	Location
5	Master	Profile	Standing over grave, spell	None	Wide	Graveyard
5a	MCU/OTS	Straight	Olivia	None	Normal	
5b	MCU/OTS	Straight	Maggie	None	Normal	
5c	CU	$\frac{3}{4}$	Olivia	None	Long	
5d	CU	$\frac{3}{4}$	Maggie	None	Long	
5e	MS	Profile	2 shot	None	Wide	
5f	Insert	High	Candles	None	Long	
5g	Insert	High	Flowers/picture	None	Long	
5h	Insert	High	Hands	None	Normal	

DISTANCE: ECU=Extreme close up; CU=Close up; MCU=Medium close up; MS=Medium shot; LS=Long Shot/Establishing Shot

ANGLE: Straight on; High; Low; Dutch (titled)

LENSING: Normal; Wide Angle; Telephoto

CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan; Tilt; Dolly; Static

Production Title: Sisters	Date:	Page: 8-9
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Shot List: Scene 6-10

Scene	Distance	Angle	Action/Subject	Camera Movement	Lensing	Location
6	Wide	Straight	Olivia goes to room, Maggie upstairs, August follows	Follow	Wide	House upstairs hallway
7	Master W	BEV	Olivia on bed	Static	Wide	Olivia's Room
7a	MCU	Profile	Olivia rolling over	Static	Normal	Olivia's room
8	Wide	Straight	Walking down hallway	Static or (Handheld?)	Wide	Hallway
8a	MS	Straight	Walking down hallway	Static or (handheld?)	Normal	Hallway
9	Master W	Straight	Maggie on bed, August pacing in and out of frame	Static	Wide	Maggie Room
9a	MCU	Straight	August	Static	Long	Maggie room
9b	CU	Straight	August	Static	Long	Maggie room
9c	MCU	Straight	Maggie	Static	Long	Maggie room
10	MCU	Profile	Olivia	Static	Normal	Hallway

DISTANCE: ECU=Extreme close up; CU=Close up; MCU=Medium close up; MS=Medium shot; LS=Long Shot/Establishing Shot

ANGLE: Straight on; High; Low; Dutch (titled)

LENSING: Normal; Wide Angle; Telephoto

CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan; Tilt; Dolly; Static

Production Title: Sisters	Date:	Page: 9-10
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Shot List: Scene 11

Scene	Distance	Angle	Action/Subject	Camera Movement	Lensing	Location
11	Master Wide	Straight	Olivia whole scene	Follow	Wide	Olivia room
11a	MCU	Straight	Olivia on the floor	Static	Long	Olivia Room
11b	MS	Profile	Starting when she goes to the book (wide enough to see book)	Static	Normal	
11c	MCU	¾	Olivia Standing over the book	Static	Normal	
11d	Insert	¾	Book	Static	Normal	
11e	CU	¾	Olivia seeing last spell	Static	Normal	
11f	MCU	¾	Olivia opening eyes	Static	Long	
11g	MS		Olivia flipping through pages	Static	Normal	
11h	MS		Pulling out magical items	Static	Normal	

DISTANCE: ECU=Extreme close up; CU=Close up; MCU=Medium close up; MS=Medium shot; LS=Long Shot/Establishing Shot

ANGLE: Straight on; High; Low; Dutch (titled)

LENSING: Normal; Wide Angle; Telephoto

CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan; Tilt; Dolly; Static

1Production Title: Sisters	Date:	Page: 10-11
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Shot List: Scene 12-15

Scene	Distance	Angle	Action/Subject	Camera Movement	Lensing	Location
12	Wide	Straight	August at Piano, liv comes up to doorway	Follow Olivia as she leaves	Wide	Living room
12a	MS	Profile	August at Piano	Static	Wide	
12b	MCU	Straight	August talking to Liv	Static	Normal	
12c	MCU	Straight	Olivia	Static	Long	
13	MS	Profile	Maggie comes in takes off scarf	Static	Wide	Front hall
13a	Wide	BEV	Maggie calling up stairs	Static	Wide	
14	Wide	Straight	Maggie walking up stairs	Static	Wide	Hallway
14a	MS	Straight	Maggie peaking in room, back to camera	Static	Normal	Hallway
15	Master W	Straight	Pointing towards doorway	Follow	Wide	Olivia room
15a	Reverse W	High	So we see floor	tilt	Wide	
15b	MCU	Low	Maggie going through books and line	Static	Normal	
15c	Insert	high	Hands going through herbs	Static	Normal	

DISTANCE: ECU=Extreme close up; CU=Close up; MCU=Medium close up; MS=Medium shot; LS=Long Shot/Establishing Shot

ANGLE: Straight on; High; Low; Dutch (titled)

LENSING: Normal; Wide Angle; Telephoto

CAMERA MOVEMENT: Pan; Tilt; Dolly; Static

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