



VISUAL MEDIA PORTFOLIO

Music and Sound for Visual Media

VEPT30011

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Introduction

This portfolio covers one project, the project being a a short film about a women called Eliza who attempts to communicate with her brother via a Séance, within this project the team worked on recording the dialogue, dialogue editing, foley recording, sound design and audio editing.

1. The Séance

See *Appendix 1 for The Séance film link*. When viewing the presentations and videos the film students had bought, it was decided upon to ask Kathryn to collaborate on her short film. As her film seemed the most interesting and was very straight forward in what was needed, and nothing was too complicated in terms of sound design and foley. As well as the goal for the team was to find a project that was more focused on sound design, dialogue and foley over music.

(Figure 1) shows the first email response from Kathryn about collaborating on The Séance project, from this point we discussed what was wanting to be done and the team offered to record the dialogue for her project before getting to work on the foley.

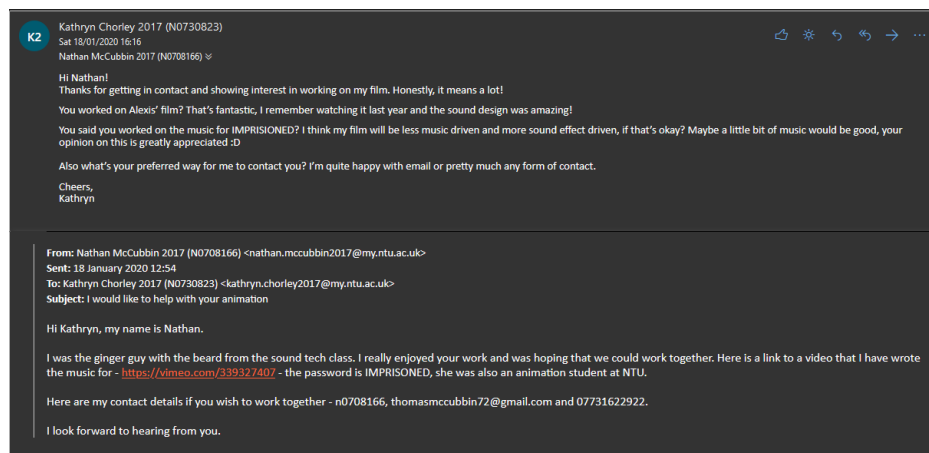


Figure 1 First Email Response

After deciding to record the dialogue first, Nathan arranged to book the studio that worked around everyone's time schedule. (Figure 2)

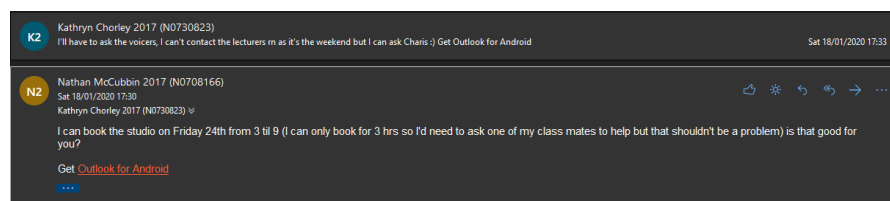


Figure 2 Arranging Studio date

When booking the studio, the U47 microphone was chosen for recording the dialogue as the U47 has a wide frequency response of 40Hz to 16kHz which covers the more important vocal frequencies and provides a clear, natural tonality of the vocals, not adding any unwanted characteristics. (Neumann, n.d) It was also chosen for its high SPL levels so the voice actors are not limited by how loud they can be.

Kathryn was asked to come the recording session as being the Director and creator of this film, it was the team's intention to allow her to direct the voice actors and allow for her vision of what, and how the voice actors should speak their lines.

Unfortunately when booking the studios, only studio 1 was available at the time needed and studio 1 is primary suited for band and music recording, whereas studio 2 has an excellent vocal booth. (Figure 3) shows the baffles placement in order to reduce the amount of reverberation captured by the microphone, for all of the quiet lines there was no audible reverb but with the loader lines there was some audible reverb, fortunately since the characters are in a large, Victorian style mansion the small amount of audible reverb actually adds to the performance as it makes it fit in more. (Kennedy, 2016)



Figure 3 Baffle placements

Unfortunately during the first recording session all the voice actors were not able to come, so a second session was booked to get the voice actors who have not recorded their lines yet. The goal for the second session production wise was to replicate the same set up as the first to keep the recordings consistent in terms of quality and tonality (Figure 4) (Kennedy, 2016)



Figure 4 Baffle Placements for second session

After all of the dialogue was recorded it was time to edit them, the first step was to cut out all of the dud lines and unwanted line, Kathryn made a word document outlining all of the lines and words she wanted. This helped make the dialogue comp easier as the team knew what lines and words were to be used in the film (Figure 5) (Hirsch, 2017)

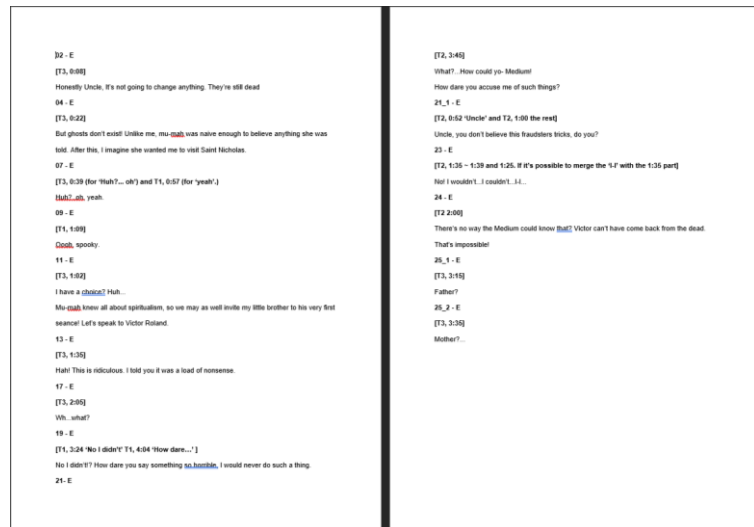


Figure 5 Dialogue Comp sheet.

After all the dialogue was comped, Manual compression was applied to the comp dialogue to make each line and word near equal in volume, this helps keep all of the dialogue consistent in volume it makes it easier for editing down the line when adding in all of the foley and sound design. Compression and an EQ was added also to reduce some of the peaks and to clean up the vocal tracks by removing any unwanted sub energy and noise distortion (Owsinski, 2017) (Formation audio, 2015)

For Eliza, Uncle and Medium, the dialogue editing was all the same. There was nothing extra needing to be done for these three characters. But Victor was different, as he was a ghost so naturally processing needed to be added to supply this ghostly effect. (Figure 6) shows the processing done to achieve this



Figure 6 Victor Effecting Processing

Fatal Frames' ghost inspired the Victor processing (SHN Survival Horror Network, 2016) (T.2:39:56), but due to Victor having actual dialogue unlike the ghosts in Fatal Frame, care was taken to make sure that Victor was intelligible. The panning for on the filter ping pong delay was set with the intelligibility in mind, as the panning were set at 30L and 30R so there is plenty of room for the main dialogue to be heard and not cluttered while also achieving that otherworldly effect. (Owsinski, 2018)

Due to the processing of the Victor dialogue, Kathryn was emailed for feedback on whether she like what was done processing wise, after some helpful feedback Victor's processing was finished which meant all of the dialogue was edited and ready for putting into the film. Kathryn was sent all of the dialogue via Google Drive and she began work on adding in the new dialogue and updating The Séance film.

The foley and sound design was needing to be recorded, an asset list was created (Figure 7). The asset list has all the written sounds that need to be recorded for the film, an optional sounds list was made for foley that are not necessary but could enhance the sound field.

The foley was listed in order of appearance, for example, Rain & wind outside atmosphere is the first piece of foley heard at the beginning of the film and glass starts cracking and water gushes through is the last heard piece of foley at the end of the film.

The foley room was booked and ready for use, the goal with the first session was to record all of the foley that did not need any props and could be recorded using foley artists, for example footsteps.

The U47 microphone was again chosen for its frequency response and high SPL, as well as for its natural sounding recording (Neumann, n.d). The other microphone chosen was the Shure Sm57, as the sm57 is a versatile microphone with a very high SPL level. (Shure, n.d) (Figure 8). The reason for having two microphone was allow for versatile recordings, as something might sound better on the Sm57 than the U47 and visa versa, as well as the Shure Sm57 is a small, durable microphone that is easy to place in awkward places.

- Asset List
- The Séance:
- Rain & Wind outside atmosphere
 - Horse hooves
 - Carriage wheels rolling
 - Rattling carriage
 - Filtered rain when inside the carriage
 - River flowing
 - Rain sounds more intense when hitting water over the bridge
 - Carriage / horse stopping
 - Curtain opening
 - Rain hitting the roof and window
 - More reverberant atmosphere when characters enter the hall (bigger room)
 - Sound of fireplace
 - People screaming
 - Roaring fire / engulfing people
 - Window breaking / curtains blowing
 - Fire goes out
 - Bell rings
 - Sound Thunder / explosion / rain gets louder when window smashes
 - Glass from broken window hitting the floor
 - Jelly kind of sound for when the ghost comes out his gob hole
 - Copy and paste the match sound and sound of her flicking it
 - Door closing
 - Back to the previous room with the medium (rain sound louder with smashed windows)
 - Sound of ghost disappearing and door slamming
 - Carriage atmosphere with rain
 - Shot of the guy riding the carriage (rain gets louder, horses get louder, hoof sounds, carriage sounds)
 - Wheel breaking as the carriage tips over the bridge, horses distressed, wheels scraping, splash from carriage.
 - Head-butting window and crack in the glass
 - Carriage falls into water and sounds of the two ghosts reappearing
 - Getting grabbed by the ghosts
 - Glass starts cracking and water gushes through
- Optional sounds:
- Bird sounds (crow)
 - Match lighting
 - Distant screaming / fire crackling / running / skid sound

Figure 7 The Séance Asset List



Figure 8 U47 and Sm57 Microphones

After the first foley session was complete and all of the none-prop foley was recorded, it was time to book another session and bring in props to record stuff like the rain, rivers, and horse bells. This session relied on the same microphones for continuity sake.

The water recording was difficult, due to not wanting to damage any equipment (Figure 9). Extra care was taken when placing the microphones, the foley artist's leg was in front of the U47 to protect it from splashing water and the sm57 was also shielded from any splashes. The recordings from the water were exactly what was needed as it supplied heavy, realistic rain and a realistic river. (Kennedy, 2016)



Figure 9 Recording rain and river

After all of the foley was recorded, it was time to edit all of the foley and remove any unwanted elements from the tracks which left only the foley itself within the takes. (Figure 10) (Hirsch, 2017) The foley was also categorised to make the editing and cleaning up processing easier.

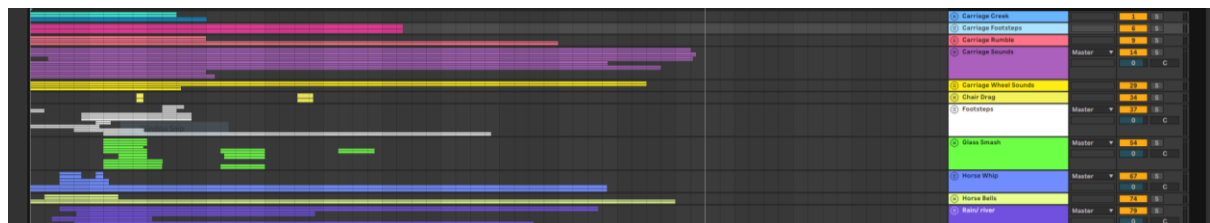


Figure 10 Organized and cleaned up Foley

After the foley was edited and cleaned up, it was time to place everything in to Premiere Pro for editing. Premiere Pro was used due to Ableton not having a video track available and because Premiere Pro is a versatile Video editor with loads of built in plugins as well as the ability to import external plugins, it is also very easy to edit audio and video with ease with its frame by frame dragging. (Kennedy, 2019)

The first step taken within Premiere Pro was to sync up all of the dialogue in place with the video, by this point Kathryn sent the team the updated film with the new dialogue lip syncs so all that had to be done was drop them in place. (Hirsch, 2017) (Figure 11)

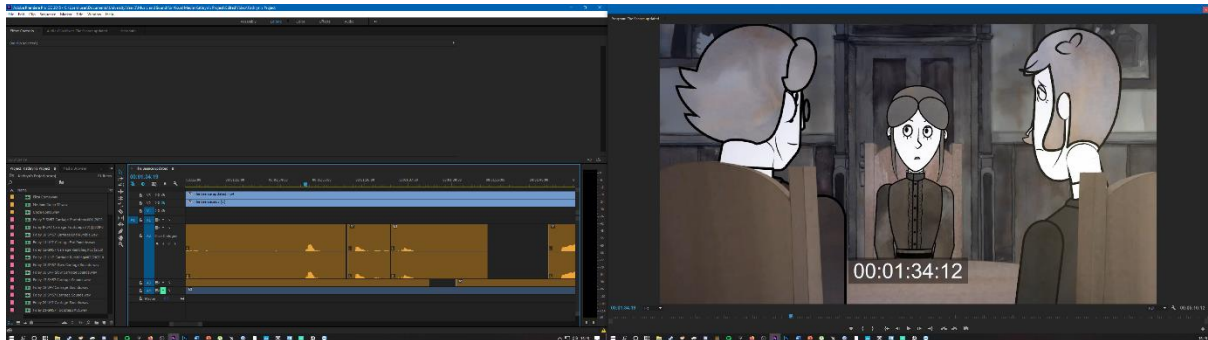


Figure 11 Syncing up Dialogue with Film

A minor error was made when editing the dialogue in Ableton, as the gaps between the lines were altered and spaced further apart than the voice actor originally delivered, thus some cutting of dead air needed to be done to allow for the lines to be properly positioned. (Figure 11) (Hirsch, 2017)

After all of the dialogue was synced up correctly, it was time to add in the reverb to create the appropriate atmosphere for each location. The first was the carriage reverberation (Figure 12), this reverb did not necessarily need to exist, due to interior of the carriage being a very absorptive environment (Figure 13), But without the reverberation the dialogue sounded too clean for it to be considered to be taken place in a real environment so a small amount of reverb was placed to create a small amount of space and liveliness. (Hirsch, 2017)

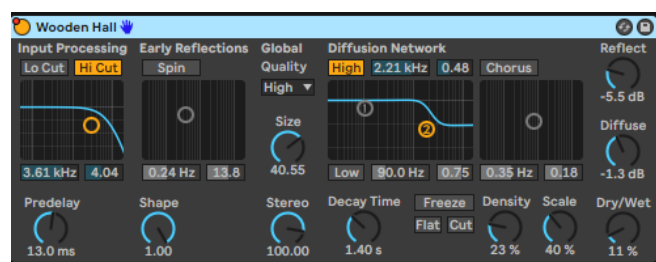


Figure 12 Carriage Reverberation



Figure 13 Carriage Interior

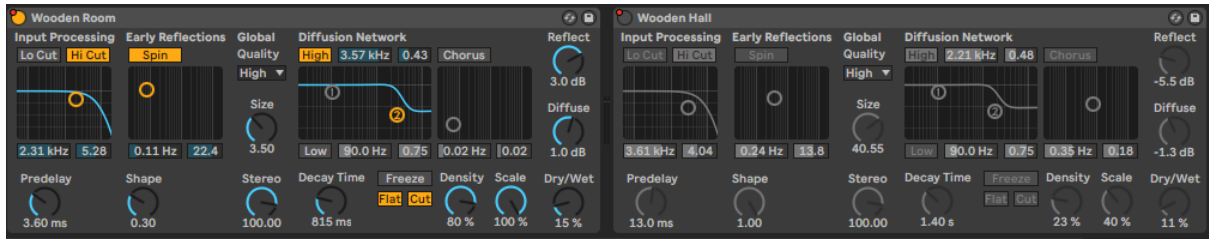


Figure 14 Automation reverbation for different environments

For the mansion, a different reverb plugin with applied and automated to only affect the dialogue that takes place in the mansion (Figure 14). The main difference between the Wooden room (Carriage) and Wooden Hall (Mansion) is the size and decay time, as with these being larger and longer, it supplies a larger reverb tail and spatial image. But with a reverb tail that long it can run in risk of making the dialogue slightly unintelligible, so the dry/wet parameter was reduced so the reverb was extremely subtle and mostly only audible on louder lines but still have the spatial image of a large room. (Hirsch, 2017)

After all of the dialogue was edited and properly processed, the only thing left was the foley and sound design to position and process. When going through all of the foley, listening to each version was done to decide which works better, U47, Sm57 or both combined. (Figure 15)

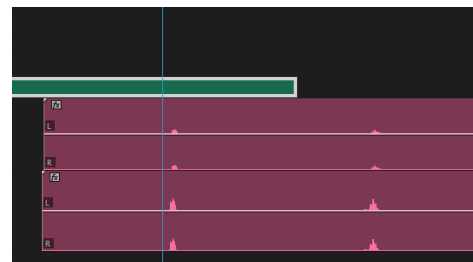


Figure 15 Comparing microphones for foley

With scene transitions, it was necessary to automate and ride the level so the foley worked with the scene, for example (Figure 16) shows the automation of the rain and river foley, during this moment the scene transitions from inside the carriage to outside with the camera positioned near the bridge. During this moment the level was reduced because the EQ was bypassed during this moment as the EQ was set up as a low pass filter which reduced the level of the rain already so when the EQ was turned off the level went back up so the level needed to be automated so it can transition with the scene and not be too loud. (Hirsch, 2017) (Kennedy, 2016)

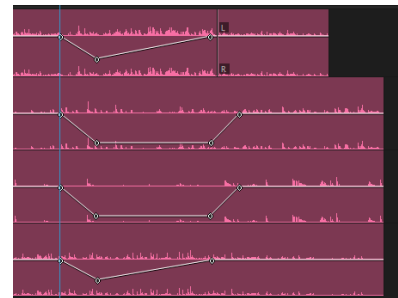


Figure 16 Level Riding of Water foley

The EQ used on the rain was set up as a low pass filter was due to emulating the low pass filter effect that happens when a sound source is outside the room. (Figure 17) (Hirsch, 2017)

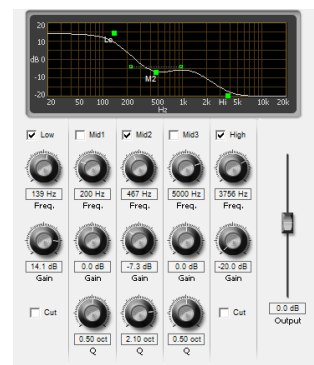


Figure 17 Rain EQ for carriage scene

(Figure 18) shows the part of the film where the lightning strikes and the window smashes, to make this part appear to be startling, it had to be massive and chaotic. This was achieved by layering it, for example to achieve a chaotic glass shattering effect, a lot of glass smashing sound effects were

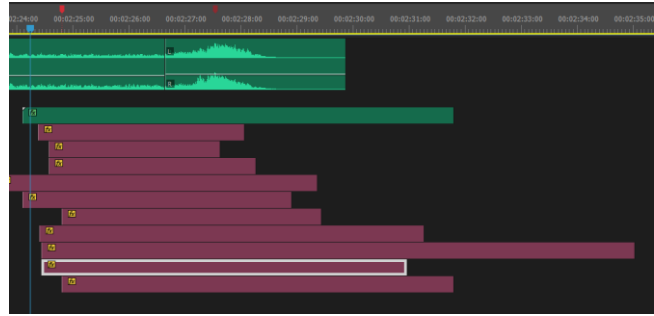


Figure 18 Layering Effects

added so it sounded like a lot of glass smashed. The lightning strike was also layered with other lightning strikes and also processed. (Figure 19) shows the processing applied to the lightning strike, this being a low shelf to add the extra weight the lightning strike needed, this was done as Kathryn supplied feedback stating the lightning was a little weak as well as being that this moment is the turning point of the film and where the plot thickens and this lightning strike is the indicator of that so it needed to be huge and impactful. (Kennedy, 2016) (Hirsch, 2017)

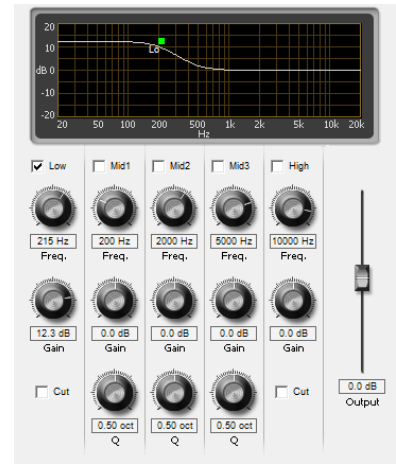


Figure 19 Low Shelf on Lightning

After all of the foley was positioned and processed correctly, Kathryn was sent the edit for feedback where she supplied a excel sheet of feedback for each part and foley (Figure 20) This was made for every team member to go through including her for her own feedbacks and notes.

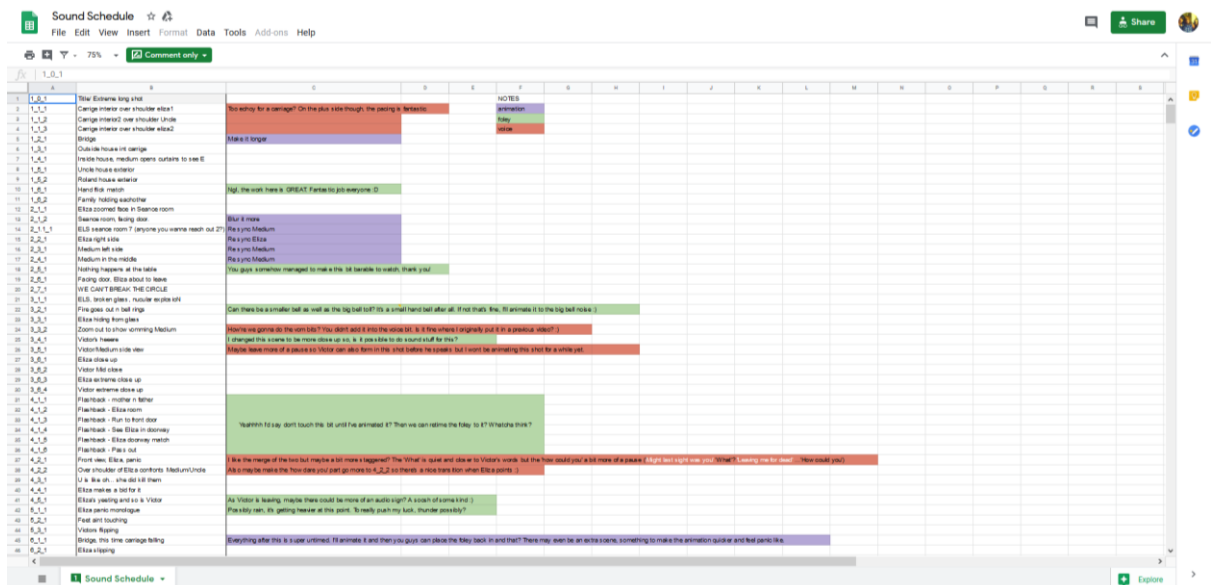


Figure 20 Feedback Excel sheet

After the feedback was received, she asked for something to be added at 2:43 because she said there was not much going on afterwards and it felt a bit of empty compared to everything else. So the team decided upon some lightening that will crackle as Victor beings to accuse Eliza and more rain will begin to pour. At the moment as well, some automation was used on the rain as since the window was smashed, the rain would be more audible (Hirsch, 2017)

She also mention having a sound effect for Victor, to add to his presence. (Figure 21) Shows the synth used to create his ghostly sound. The sound is a sine wave that occasionally modulates in volume. The sound is a simple but an effective one, as it creates an eery feeling while also not being over the top and not taking away anything from the scene. (Kennedy, 2016) (Hirsch, 2017)



Figure 21 Victor's Ghostly Body

For the flashback/ exposition scene (3:14) The reverb chosen for that moment was something a bit more unrealistic as it emphasizes the fact that it is a flashback scene. (Figure 22) Shows the plugin and its parameters, The diffusion and decay were set fairly large to create a large, smooth spatial image. (Hirsch, 2017)



Figure 22 Raum Reverb for footsteps and Fire during flashback

Another piece of feedback supplied by Kathryn was about the daydream sequence when Eliza is at the front of the mansion (1:21), as she stated that it also felt a bit underwhelming so in order to make it seem more lively, the existing foley that was already used during that moment was processed with the iZotope Vinyl Spin down parameter as an indicator for the audience that she is slipping into a dream, as well as automating the EQs low pass filter so it increases the low end of the countryside foley. With these two processes the indication of Eliza going into a daydream was more evidence and was approved by Kathryn. (Hirsch, 2017)

For the same section Kathryn suggested using screams to emphasise the pain of her family, so Nathan and his girlfriend recorded themselves screaming and added it in to the film. At first the male scream continued until Elisa snapped out of her daydream, but Kathryn asked for it to fade before then as she stated that the fire cutting out was good enough. (Hirsch, 2017) Kennedy, 2016)

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Appendices

1. The Séance film V4.
<<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1kfEAEC1wJeHSJ8Z5QDoqJ6uEfhaEmD2H>>