

DRAMA

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Bloodwood

REFLECTION STATEMENT

In my Video Drama, 'Bloodwood', I aimed to create a dramatic short film that explores a sub-set of possible challenges and misinterpretations in the neurodiverse community and highlights the value of neurodiverse individuals who are misunderstood if viewed only through a neurotypical lens.

By having a non-verbal main character, I also hoped to raise awareness for people with non-verbal autism spectrum disorder (ASD), who are under-represented in film and media. I explored some of the attributes and challenges that accompany living with ASD, in particular the difficulties in social interactions and communication and common traits such as sound sensitivity. In creating a non-verbal protagonist who is sensitive to noise, the utilisation of sound was central in helping me develop the story and achieve tension, climax and engagement.

My creative process as a whole was extensive, taking many hours of planning, writing, storyboarding, filming and editing. Informing and inspiring this process was extensive online research and films, such as Louis Theroux's insightful documentary *Extreme Love - Autism* and Leonardo DiCaprio's performance in *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*. Importantly, significant inspiration came from my personal relationships with people from the neurodiverse community and their families.

In regards to my filmmaking process, I was influenced by several short and feature films and the abundance of free tutorials and lessons on YouTube (hopefully proving to my parents that all the time spent watching videos and films wasn't a waste of time).

The hours spent on this film have caused me to learn more than I had imagined. They have given me a greater understanding and appreciation of filmmaking as an art form. Although COVID restrictions meant that I wasn't able to complete the film as I wished, overall I'm very happy with 'Bloodwood' and excited for the film-making experiences that lie ahead.

SCRIPT

1. Intro scene – Location: Clarke’s Point Dock

Opens with a black screen.

The sinister instrumental, *When Everyone Else Is Gone* by Christian Andersen plays quietly.

Subtle inaudible muttering, quiet birds chirping and rustling leaves are heard. We hear feet walking.

[Fade On]

The first shot opens on a wooden walkway with the camera slowly transitioning left. The sound of walking feet and muttering becomes more prominent. Bare feet enter the frame moving left and pass. As feet enter we hear a subtle rise in music. Feet are dirty and bare.

The second shot conveys an extreme close up of Jake’s mouth - muttering what seems like indistinct gibberish. Head is faced down looking only half a metre in front of him. His identity is hidden.

The third shot displays a wide shot, looking up at Jake from in front of him as he holds a metal implement in his hand which is unclear to the viewer. Black headphones sit on his neck. Symmetry is important.

Tracking shot of Jake walking. Muttering and heavy footsteps are more prominent. Jake is **menacing**.

A wide-angled drone shot provides visual contrast. The drone slowly moves backwards. This is the first time we get a good look at the surroundings. Jake is placed right of the frame and we view a woman (Rachel) who is exercising and power-walks into the frame from the bottom left. The music rises and becomes more intense.

Close up of Rachel as she notices Jake ahead of her. Rachel slows down, frowns and looks both surprised and concerned. The camera is angled down on Rachel.

Close up of Jake, still muttering. Camera looking up at Jake to convey power and dominance. Jake’s eyes flick up to see Rachel and very quickly flick back down.

Closer drone shot as subjects become closer in distance to one another.

Over the shoulder shot on Jake with Rachel in the background. Both characters walk slowly. Heartbeat, muttering and breath are subtly heard. The camera pans around Jake's head to his face to view muttering. Jake stops walking and muttering and we pan back around his shoulder to see Rachel turn and walk quickly back in the direction from which she came. (Heavy breath)

Wide angled drone shot, Rachel is still moving quickly away in the bottom left of the frame and exits. Jake is stopped in the middle of the frame. The drone moves out and we see the title "BLOODWOOD" above which is 3D tracked into the scene on After Effects.

Back to Jake who returns to muttering. The camera pans around Jake's head while he puts on his headphones. The camera movement finishes as a close up with a side-profile view of Jake's head centre frame. Jake turns the power button on for his headphones.

HEADPHONE'S VOICE

**BEEP* Power on. Noise-cancelling activated.*

All sound becomes blocked off including wind, chattering, birds and non-diegetic music. Jake's muttering ceases. As sound becomes muted, a dolly zoom moves away from Jake as his frown/preoccupied look disintegrates into a neutral expression. The previously dark, cold and monochromatic colour scheme fades into a brighter, warmer and more pleasant colour scheme. Jake is in a calmer, more comfortable state. Jake double touches the side of headphones to play music.

Another Night by Cody High begins to play.

2. IN BUSHLAND - Location: Clarke's Point Bushland

The same song continues as Jake walks through the bush holding his metal implement listening to music. Panning shots through trees and creating an eerie vibe. Masking transitions with trees as well. B-roll of surroundings.

As Jake walks through the bush he also plays with his necklace, a common mannerism of people who are neurodiverse.

Suddenly changes to Rachel's point of view, looking at Jake from behind trees. Jake moves up a ledge into a hidden clearing.

Cut back to Jake as we see his arm rise and fall as we hear the metal object striking and scraping the earth.

Changes back to Rachel's P.O.V. as she sees a peek of Jake's hunched back and hear the sound of metal hitting the earth.

No longer in Rachel's point of view, we view Rachel pull out her phone as an animated holographic of a texting conversation appears next to her. Rachel seems nervous and upset as she begins to text an unknown character. The texting conversation is as follows:

TEXT: H

R: *I'm in Wallum's Bush. There's a strange guy here. I think he has a knife*

H: *You ok? What's he doing?!*

R: *I don't want to get too close.*

R: *I think he's digging.*

H: *Do you think you should call the police?*

With the last message, we view a close up of Rachel who looks up, unsure of what to do.

Changes to shot of Jake scraping out soil and hammering ground with his tool. Still in his zone with noise-cancelling headphones. Music nears climax.

HEADPHONE VOICE

BEEP* Low Battery. Please recharge headset. *BEEP

Sounds of his surroundings return. Frontwards moving dolly zoom shot as Jake lifts his head, conveying how Jake is being pulled away from the focus of his task. Correspondingly, the light and warm colour scheme becomes dark and cold once more.

Close up shot of Jake as he realises what has happened. He is in shock and anxious. He slowly takes off his headphones and places them around his neck while looking around his surrounding space with rapid eye movement and little head movement.

Noises around Jake become clearer, evident using panning in sound and showing clips. e.g. People walking past and talking, leaves rustling, a dog barking, water smashing into rocks, birds squawking, helicopter flying past, kids playing... etc. We also faintly hear the sounds of sirens in the distance, however it is unclear if they are for another purpose. A frenzy of these sound-associated clips quickly alternates, creating tension.

With the introduction of sounds, Jake grabs his belongings and begins to leave, still stressed and hearing passing noises. Sounds stay together and volume climaxes with riser, creating a large amount of tension.

Once out on path and with a climax of noises, Jake stops, screws his eyes, puts his chin to his chest and shuts his ears tight with his hands making desperate humming noises. Before putting his hands to his ears, we view a slo-mo shot of Jake releasing his trowel and plastic stakes. Jake sways back and forth in an attempt to calm himself down. He is breathing heavily and starts softly hitting his head with the palm of his hand. We view a wide shot of Jake as he is forced out of his own safe and comfortable world and into a world he perceives as chaotic.

Drone shot of bushland from above pulls back over the environment. As the drone pulls away, the amalgamation of sounds gradually fade out.

We see a blurred shot of Jake's belongings lying on the ground where he dropped them. The scene is silent, contrasting the previous loud combination of noise.

Changes to a wide shot of the belongings from further away. Rachel walks into frame, in between the camera and belongings.

The blurred close up of Jake's items comes into focus and we are able to see that there is a trowel and plastic stake used for identifying flora on the ground.

On the plastic stake there are printed labels with the words:

'Red Bloodwood' and the botanical name, 'Corymbia Gummifera'.

Rachel's hand comes into frame and picks up the items.

We view a close up of Rachel as she observes the items. She expresses realisation and then disappointment in herself.

The shot fades into a timelapse of a sunset, conveying the passing of time.

3. BUSH RESOLUTION - Kelly's Bush

At a later date, the morning sun shines on the scenery and Rachel is out walking.

She walks by and spots a group of people, including Jake, doing native regeneration work. Jake is facing away from Rachel organising plant labels. Jake looks content and his headphones rest on his neck.

We view Rachel move cautiously towards him.

RACHEL

Ex... Excuse me? (Jake looks up)
(Jake is initially confused but neutral)

I think this is yours.
(Holds out Jake's trowel)

Jake looks at his trowel and then up towards Rachel. Jake reaches out to take the trowel, smiles slightly, then nods once towards Rachel in appreciation. Close up stays on Jake's face after he nods at Rachel, as he looks down at his trowel, finally relaxed.

Close up of the trowel digging into the ground, and followed by a close up of a group of people placing a tree sapling into the hole.

Wide shot of Jake placing in stake in front as others move out of frame. Zoom slowly pulls back and once others move out, we just see Jake and the stake which says "Red Bloodwood".

Fades to black.

Credits roll.

End.







