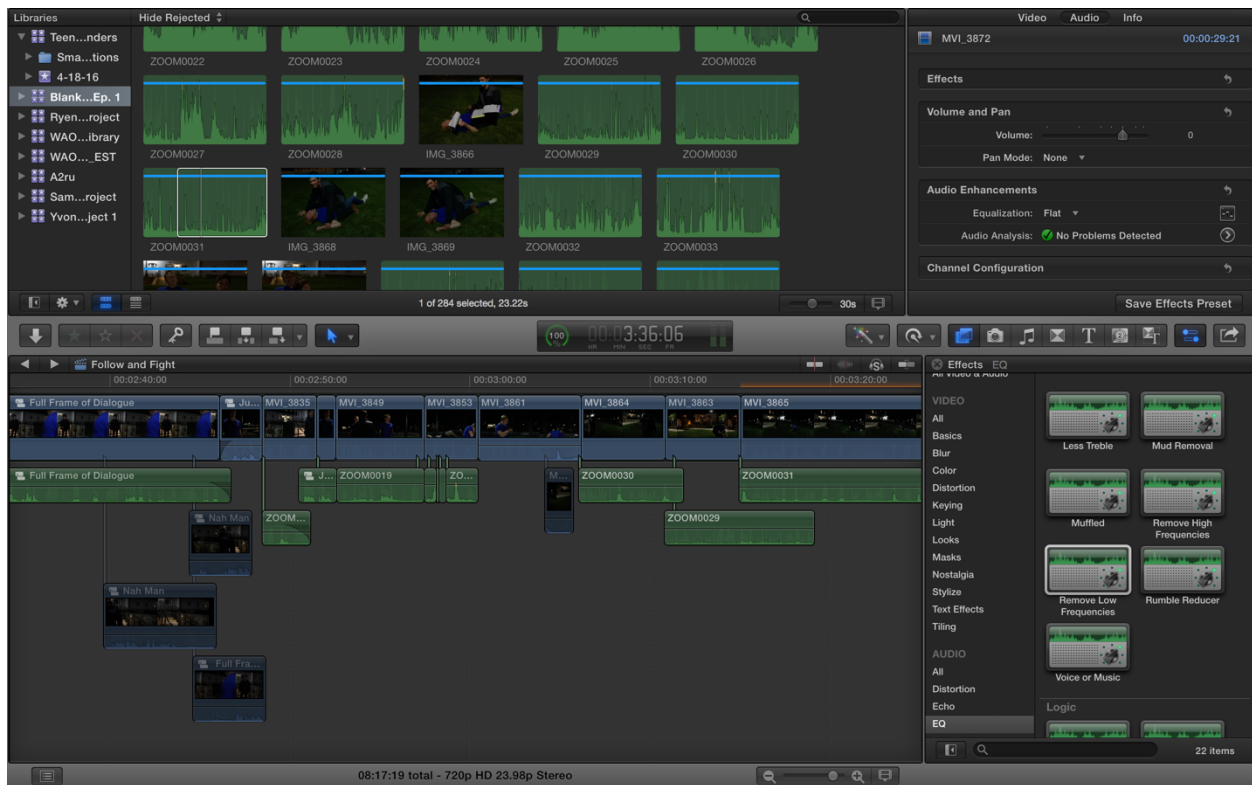


Artist Minigrant Outcome Report
Proposed to Fund Equipment for Research
Aspen Miller, aqm2fv@virginia.edu
April 24, 2016

The Sea of Sound Waves

I initially proposed research in proper multichannel sound recording and that's exactly what I did. When I first began my research, I asked myself "how do I create dynamic audio?" At the time, I had absolutely no answer. Now, after 50 hours of shooting and 200 hours of editing, I have an idea of where to start.



A sample of the early editing process

Pristine audio starts with the recording. After my research, I designed three basic guidelines to assist with capturing clean audio; know your equipment backwards and forwards (its capacities, its connections, its batteries), know your location (outside or inside, weather, people, WIND!), and know what you need your finished audio to sound like (natural, perfectly clean, dialogue vs space). These rules are only a start to proper recording. To be honest, I broke all of them. I encountered issues from pretty much every major shoot and I usually didn't notice until I was editing it. For example, in the picture above, I identified wind in the track. This is an editor's worst nightmare. This happened because I didn't know my equipment yet (the boom "on" light isn't supposed to remain on, I thought it was broken and I didn't have a deadcat for the second mic), I didn't know my location (it was windy and I had no idea as the director, but

the boom op knew), and I didn't know how I wanted my final audio product to sound. That shoot was a learning experience indeed. But that's an extreme example. The picture below shows my editing set up for an inside scene.



Editing out the hum

I was fully prepared for this scene. I knew my location, I knew my equipment, and I knew what I wanted my audio to be. However, both my boom op and myself missed the dryer humming away in the corner. A constant buzz that led to hours of filtering and adjusting. Further evidence that knowing your environment is crucial.

As far as the style of the piece is concerned (Neo-noir), we accomplished that relatively well. The audio was often soft in intimate moments and the voice overs were done classically. Though we achieved the desired aesthetic, it came at the price of hours and hours of audio clean up. My team was very new to a larger production setting (I was as well) and much of our time went to correcting mistakes and learning how to operate rather than creative decisions. However, with parts two and three right around the corner, I am confident that our experiences from the first episode will give us an advantage.

I want to thank the J. Sanford Miller Family and the Colbert Family for their support of the UVa Miller Arts Scholars Program and the funding they have provided us. It has led to the kind of experiential learning that cannot be matched by books and tutorials.

Set photos



Filming the fight scene on with my crew



The director on the left (me) and my boom op center



Danny Wagner, Boom op and screenplay writer.