INTERROGATION: Documentation

When planning our immersive experience, we discussed multiple different ideas. After learning how to use A-Frame in lectures, we discussed using this platform to make our experience. Using Facebook Messenger, we discussed different concepts that we could incorporate into our product. Ellie suggested a chase scene, which would be filmed using a 360 camera. Then, the user would be able to put the google cardboard on and look behind them and see someone chasing them. Connor gave the feedback that he personally wouldn't find it very immersive, as he felt that he would be more immersed in a scene like that if he was physically moving - which we would not be able to facilitate. Because of this, we began to consider other scenes / short films we could film. The next day, we decided it would be productive to go to the Media Hub to find out if they had a 360 degree camera, which upon doing so we learned that they did not. Consequently, we started to come up with some different ideas.

Brandon then suggested an interrogation scene. After agreeing that this was something we all wanted to do, we started to think about how we would incorporate this into A-Frame. Ellie suggested taking inspiration from the opening scene of the 'Call of Duty Black Ops' campaign. This is set in a dark room we the user had the ability to look down and see the characters legs and their arms tied to a chair. The room includes multiple television screens used to disorientate the individual, and some torture tools to induce fear. The interrogator can sometimes be seen, but the dark and dingy lighting makes it difficult to make out facial features properly. We considered using this layout for a while, however eventually we realised that this may be too much work for the amount of time we had, and we were unsure if we had the right skills to create this scene and have it be convincing and immersive. Upon discussion, we decided to utilise the binaural microphones, and then started coming up with ideas to incorporate this into our project.

As we were struggling to come up with specific concepts, Ellie suggested first coming up with a specific narrative. As a group, we talked through lots of ideas, until finally deciding on a gangster theme. We thought that this would be easier to represent than an official police investigation, because we had all seen films and TV shows that we could draw experience from. We watched some significant scenes from 'Pulp Fiction', and 'Reservoir Dogs', and looked at the screenplays for both films. Then, Ellie began writing a script using google docs, which she shared with the rest of the group. After some time, the whole group began working on the script simultaneously in lecture time, and separately at home. On the 9th November, we got together as a group and revised the script. After we were all happy with it, Ellie used Celtx to format the document and make it look more like a script. This meant that the stage cues and external sounds were distinguishable from the dialogue, making it easier to read. Ellie then drew out a specific route for the interrogator to take while reciting their lines. She decided to do this because it would allow us to take advantage of the binaural microphones by making the user very aware of the space around them. It also meant that the user may feel more disorientated when there is a silence, as they do not know what direction the interrogator will come from next.

We then discussed specific group roles, and Connor volunteered to take on the main role of Mike. While Connor took time to better familiarise himself with the script, we looked for another person to take on the role of Johnny. After asking a few classmates, Ben volunteered himself.

Once we were comfortable with the script, we went to find a room in the Roland Levinsky building to practice recording our experience. We felt that this was vital before actually recording the final take because it would allow both the actors and producers to listen to the recording and decide if any changes need to be made to improve the quality and make it more immersive.

We found a quiet empty room, which we then reorganised to suit our production. We moved multiple chairs to the edges of the room, so we had one in the centre with lots of open space around it. Brandon sat in this chair and help the binaural microphones to his ears, as the technicians at the media hub recommended him not to insert them, as other students would be using them at a later date. Once Brandon started recording, Connor recited the whole script in one take. We then went back to the classroom to listen to the first take. We were surprised to find that quality of the recording was better than expected. None of it was too loud or too quiet, and the different locations the interrogator moved to were easily distinguishable. Because we felt that the practice take was successful, we went back to record another take, this time recruiting Ben to recite his lines as well. Just before we began our second take, Brandon mentioned that Connor's footsteps weren't as loud as he had expected, and he told the group that the interrogator character might be more intimidating with louder footsteps. To solve the problem, Ellie took off her steel toe Dr. Marten boots to give to Connor, which he wore for every other take. By the end of production, we had four separate recordings of the whole script. Once we had listened to all of them, we decided that the last take sounded smoother and more immersive. This was probably due to the fact that both Connor and Ben would of had multiple opportunities to get to know the script better, therefore the whole thing was more convincing.

Over the weekend after we had recorded the script, Ellie used Adobe Audition to edit together the dialogue with multiple different sound effects found online (1). After this, she used different effects and filters to make the sounds more unique and convincing. For example, the first gunshot sound has been modified and changed to make it sound muffled with more reverb, to make it obvious that it came from a different room. Next she changed the placement of each sound, to make sure that the space sounds more 3D. This part of the editing process proved to be the more important in terms of how immersive the experience is, as it allows the user to feel as if they are in the room with the interrogator.

In conclusion, we worked as a group on most of the project. We were all included in pretty much every discussion that took place, and everyone had a say before any final decisions were made. However there were some more specific roles that we took on individually. For example, Connor assisted in helping write the script for the scene which was to be recorded using the binaural recorder we acquired from the Media Hub using his student card. In addition to this, he took the main role as Mike in the recording of the interrogation scene itself, where he had to read through the script and perform it to the user to the best of his ability within the time we had, making sure we utilised the binaural audio recorder to it's maximum potential. He did this by moving around the user and get up close and far away from them whilst he was reciting the script, therefore recording the sound to be in a 360 environment that immersed the user effectively. Ellie however, took on the role of director. She aided in the script writing process, but also took charge of stage directions, the actors, and the layout of the recording setup. To add to this she took responsibility for the initial edit

of the product, using adobe audition. Brandon also aided in the script writing. And when we recorded, Brandon held the microphones and also acted as a silent victim for Connor to interrogate. As well as this, Brandon revised Ellie's first edit of the sound file, and changed a few sound effects to improve the quality and the immersion of our product.

In order to improve the immersiveness of our experience in the future we could commit to various additional techniques. This includes replacing the blindfold given to the user with a digital VR scene created using A-Frame that they would view through a Google Cardboard. The user would not be able to move around in this scene and would still remain sitting down in a dark room that restricts their view, similarly to the scene in the image above. This scene could include various modeled and animated elements such as televisions with psychological imagery displayed on them and a distant incomprehensible figure who would be talking to the user through a speaker sound system rather than walking around them, taking away the more confrontational elements of the experience but assisting the user in immersing themselves overall as they can see where they are rather than having to picture themselves there with the sole aid of sound. Alternatively we could continue to use the blindfold but put the sound within a 360 scene so that noises coming from the user's right side wouldn't move with them if they turned their head in that direction due to the headphone speakers.

(1) SOURCES FOR SOUND FILES

Door:
FX Sounds
https://www.mysoundeffect.com/house/

Johnny's gun:
hunterrocks24
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Am-20IeY5nQ

Ear ringing :
SFX and GFX
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHTinEcgLn0

Other gun fire:
Mike Koenig
http://soundbible.com/1631-AR-15-Gunfire.html

Knife:
Sidney Turner
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U34MegCHlig