Home Sweet Home

Pai-Hsueh Cheng

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Rachel Lin Weaver, Committee Chair
Lesley Duffield
Nathan King

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ABSTRACT

Home Sweet Home is a short horror film that tells the story of Gavin and his encounters with supernatural energies after he moves to a new room. In the end, the story reveals that his roommate is the initiator. The movie draws inspiration from a variety of classic horror films, with an emphasis on those that are set in homes and bedrooms. Home is usually considered the safest place, but when this familiar place is haunted, it tortures us, and we have nowhere to run. Taiwanese religious elements along with urban legends, are featured prominently in the video as a source of the terror.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Home Sweet Home is a short horror film produced by a group of Virginia Tech students. The film tells the story of Gavin following his encounters with the paranormal following his relocation to a new room. In the end, the story reveals that his roommate is the initiator. The film is inspired by many classic horror films with a concentration on films containing scenes in the bedroom and at home in particular, such as the Japanese movie" Ju On," the "A Nightmare on Elm Street" series, and "It Follows," etc. Home is usually considered the safest place, but when this familiar place is haunted, it tortures us, and there is nowhere we can flee. Taiwanese religious elements and urban legends are featured prominently in the video as a source of terror. Details in the film show Taiwanese's unique religious belief culture: a blend of Taoism, Buddhism, and some Hinduism and local beliefs.

Home Sweet Home

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Third, I appreciate the hard work of the film team and my actors. They did this video project with me at no cost, even though they were all busy with their finals. Filming is time-consuming; a one-minute video might need one hour to shoot. Therefore, thank you so much to the crew; you deserved the highest credit.

I love Blacksburg. My roommates, best friend Max, MFA students, and professors are here. They are always friendly to me, like my ideas, and put up with my poor time management and leadership skills. They always make time to work with me. I sincerely thank them.

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Introduction

I love watching movies. My two favorite movie genres are comedy and horror because both provide rich emotional impact.

I have an open mind when I think about topics, like how things may not always work as they seem or maybe conceal something else. Thinking this way helps me come up with ideas for new horror stories. As a horror movie fan, I have watched around 500 related films. Some of them are cliche, whereas most of them are up to new skills. After watching some movies, I was scared to death, but I still admire the brilliant writers who can come up with new ideas. The authors are accomplished professionals who are well-versed in the horror genre. They want to find new ways to tell stories. To me, they truly are the artists of the horror genre.

My friends and I have had some terrifying experiences that inspired "Home Sweet Home." I grew up in a Taoist religious fortune-telling family in Taiwan, where I am familiar with religious rituals and instruments. I involved the Taoist religion in my video; therefore, it appeared that the supernatural aspects were based on reality and were part of an established system. I hope the Eastern religious elements would create a mysterious and unsettling atmosphere for my horror.

Chapter One: Why Horror Video

I. Why Horror?

Many people ask me why I keep making horror videos. Don't I think they're dark and frightful? They ask. I would say yes. Well done horror films are scary. Some people believe everyone has a dark side, so making or watching a horror film lets people achieve catharsis. In my view, working within the realm of horror is a way to confront fear and free my imagination. The real horror is protected from the make-believe storyline by transforming my worries into stories.

I'm unsure if I was born like this or if some experiences have made me a horror lover. Tim Waggoner, one of my favorite horror writers, mentions in his book, "I like to read and write horror because it's fun." (Waggoner 20). To me, horror is not only fun. Although it can satisfy my need for thrills, there are occasions when I'm too terrified to fall asleep. What a fascinating but torturous field!

Besides, enjoy knowing other people's horror stories; I often have unique ideas and am intrigued by the unknown. Like other storytellers, I observe and analyze things happening around me, and they become the fodder for my creation. The difference between different authors and me is that while I look at something, an idea often pops into my mind: "What if things do not work as they seem?" I alter reality and make it frighten.

Let me tell you a story describing how I turned an incidental reality into a terrifying story. Last Christmas, I visited my close friend's big house, as I usually spend my winter break there with my friend. One day I was reading in a cozy spot next to a window on the second

floor. I was reading when I noticed a vintage brown Volkswagen Beetle parked in front of the residence, so I peered out the window.

I saw a white lady in her 50s get out of her vehicle, she was in an elegant burgundy dress while also wearing a small black round hat, and then she knocked on the neighbor's door opposite my friend's house. She was familiar to me because she frequently came to this area. She gave me a flyer of Jesus' resurrection last time and spent plenty of time explaining how Jesus saves people from sins. I watched her knock on two neighbors' doors opposite, but no one answered.

There was a little frustration on her face. She was moving towards our home at the moment. I was alone in the house then, and I don't know why, but I started getting nervous because I did not want to answer the door, either!

Soon I heard the knocking on our door downstairs. I did not move from the spot where I was sitting. After a few seconds, she stopped knocking. My anxiety, however, was rising even though the hammering noise had ceased when I noticed that her car was still parked outside. I wanted to hear other sounds! Perhaps some footsteps showing she is leaving! But I did not hear anything.

Then something horrible came to my mind.

Why did I not hear anything after she stopped knocking? What if she came to our backyard and saw through the French window to check if there was really no one at home? Then another awful notion followed, causing me to leave the bay window immediately: Stop looking outside! She knew you were in the house, but you purposefully disregarded her. She will stretch her neck, a long, long, pale, and wrinkled neck, from downstairs to reach the second-floor window, and she'll yell at you, her eyes wide open, her face fierce: "Why you don't answer the door!"

Figure 1. Rokurokubi. The old lady with a long neck in my imagination, her appearance is like one of the Japanese ghosts -Rokurokubi. From Romero David. “Rokurokubi Art Poster.” *Artstation*, https://www.artstation.com/prints/art_poster/71jE/rokurokubi

I was terrified to death, wrapping my body and head with a comforter, curled up in bed. I did not dare to open my eyes because I was afraid to see something I was not supposed to. (And the "something" usually was just created by me). As you can see, I envision horrifying alternatives to everyday life to frighten myself.

I have read an article about an interview with Stephen King; he mentioned how he came up with new story ideas. Surprisingly, He and I have one thing in common: He looks at something normal and tells himself: "Something is wrong with that."

In the process of creating as well as visualizing horror stories, I find them very satisfying. Since I am the one who is aware of what's coming next, I would not get shocked by the unknown. Rather, I'm doing some gruesome things to frighten folks. Jonn Skipp, the writer of "A Nightmare on Elm Street 5" explains in "It's Alive- Bringing Your Nightmares to Life" why he writes horror: "I make up my crazy shit, and I'm going to make you feel it. You don't like it? Good!"

II. Why did I make horror videos?

There are many reasons why I made horror videos, and each reason is usually connected with others. Nevertheless, I have now concluded that video would be an excellent medium to convey my stories for several reasons.

A. Keep us on the same page

As a creative technologies graduate student, besides crafting stories, I also enjoy visualizing my tales, so I make videos. Instead of just holding short clips, my videos contain a complete and accurate storyline; therefore, I consider them short movies. Some people compare it with reading and mention that watching videos may limit people's imagination, but the advantage of videos is that they are entertaining and easy to share. Compared to words, my stories are real and intuitive to my audience. "Movies tend to reach a wider audience than, say, novels, graphic novels, or stage play." Said Taylor Grant, an award-winning storyteller

in books as well as films, in *Where Nightmares Come From*. Additionally, by filming, I could precisely convey what each plot looks like in my mind, including the color tones, pace, expression, background sound ... etc., to keep audiences and myself on the same page.

B. External, not internal

"A film emphasizes the camera, visuals, and sounds. It illustrates what's happening on the outside. （Grant 61）" Said Taylor Grant in *Where Nightmares Come From.* On the contrary, we comprehend that video might not be the best choice if narratives mainly rely on internal dialogue. The setting of most of my stories, also for "Home Sweet Home," is primarily in reality; they are located around our daily life. Furthermore, the story is driven by external scenes and plots, not the characters' inner world. So a video would be a suitable format for my scary tale.

C. Learn from the best

As a horror movie fan, I deeply admire and engraved in memory some classic scenes which build an attractive atmosphere. They might have excellent editing, sound design, lighting, or shooting angles. When I direct my videos, I connect to similar scenes I have watched while trying to adapt them to my scenarios. This way, I depict my story visually and carry some elements I learn from excellent films.

D. Visual pleasure in the narrative film

In Laura Mulvey's essay: *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, she mentioned, "The cinema offers a number of possible pleasures. One of them is scopophilia. There are some situations where simply seeing is enjoyable. There are circumstances in which looking itself is a source of pleasure, just as, in the reverse formation, there is pleasure in being looked at. (Mulvey 11) " Audiences who watch horror videos curiously gaze at the poor character on the screen, unsure of what will occur next. Although they got scared and nervous while watching it, they would ultimately realize they were safe, and the horrible situation they watched would not happen to them. In addition to satisfying the need to observe people's private lives, which is usually forbidden, they also find control of their life. Therefore, based on Laura's argument, I told my story visually, expecting it to have a significant sensory and psychological impact on the audience, resulting in some increased state of pleasure and control of their life.

Chapter Two: Why Home?
-The Research and Inspiration

I. The unknown terror happened at home

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown." Said H. P. Lovecraft in his publication *Supernatural Horror in Literature*.

The key to the above quote is "unknown." People get frightened of unknown things, but because they are mysterious, we also like to talk and make stories about them. Many horror films have an unidentified environment where characters may become lost in odd, dark, and quiet forests or be forced to remain in an abandoned, unsettling cottage or spacecraft that appears unoccupied but is inhabited by many aliens who prey on humans. These scenes are familiar to us; they are the typical "unknown" setting.

I would not say the setting mentioned above is cliché; however, they are often seen in various horror films; they create a suspenseful atmosphere to support the unknown state while disturbing the audience. Nevertheless, turning what is safe and comfortable, like a home, into the unknown is unsettling and horrifying. In the last chapter, I mentioned that sometimes I distort reality into something unusual while composing a new plot afterward. Most people think home can be the safest place, where people would have a sense of belonging and feel relaxed and comfortable. When they get home, they rejuvenate and are ready for the next task.

But what if the home is no longer safe? What if some unknown entities hide in the home? Will we still believe home is our safest place? When I came up with the following idea, I was thrilled to make a horror story that happened at home.

Many horror materials inspired me to shape my work "Home Sweet Home," The Japanese horror movie *Ju-On: The Grudge* has the most significant impact on me. The movie's protagonist is a woman whose husband violently killed and mutilated her in their home. Therefore, the woman's resentment has always existed inside the building, which led to every new move resident meeting the horrible paranormal phenomenon or even being killed in the house; consequently, the bitterness of the original victims plus the resentment of the recent victims increased the severity of the curse, besides the ghost's terrifying appearance as well as its creepy sounds. The most significant difference between Ju-On: The Grudge and other horror-happen-at-home films is: That ghosts could exist anywhere in the house! It would be in the closet, in the bathroom, standing next to the bed; even though you are hiding in the

Figure 2. Ghost in the comforter. A screenshot from Takashi Shimizu's movie "Ju-On."

comforter because you are so terrified, you will see the ghost in the comforter already, which will be staring back at you!

Figure 3. Ghost stands aside of bed. A screenshot from Takashi Shimizu's movie "Ju-On."

I concluded many horror films and stories that scare me the most, and it turns out they share one similarity: the story happens in reality; they all take place at home, to be more precise. For instance, the film *A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984), The Babadook (2014),* and Allen Poe's *Black Cat* in *Master of Horror (2007),* etc. Tim Waggoner, in his book *Writing in the Dark*, suggests how to write a unique and influential horror story: "By crafting stories drawn from personal horror" To highlight his point, what makes it scary is: Home, the safest place for us that is no longer safe; when some danger appears to us, we will have nowhere to run.

Chapter Three: Story

I. Story Outline

The story takes place at home. The story's outline follows: a young man, Gavin, moves into a cheap rental apartment. The flat is outdated, but everything appears to be in order after cleaning. Gavin was then excited to begin his new life here. Nevertheless, he was not the only one living in this apartment; he had a roommate who lived in the other room. The roommate looked messy and owned many Tao religious instruments scattered in his room. Besides, the roommate often did weird Tao rituals in the middle of the night. Gavin was troubled by the noises most of the night.

After Gavin moved in for a few weeks, he frequently encountered strange things at home. He believed that the roommate's strange religious instruments caused it, therefore, used the chance to discard his roommate's religious belongings. Afterward, the days became normal for a few days, so Gavin thought he could finally have a peaceful life. Unfortunately, afterward, the strange things that happened to Gavin became increasingly severe: he began to see ghosts. In addition, those ghosts attempted to harm him. In a terrible encounter, he yelled for help, and his roommate appeared in front of his door at that time like a hero.

Nevertheless, in the end, the roommate still could not save Gavin because he did not have religious instruments to banish ghosts, so the paranormal pulled Gavin into the shadows. But in fact, the roommate was the initiator of the whole story. After Gavin was killed, he snickered and marked an x on Gavin's head in a group photo; Gavin was the last one he killed in the group picture.

II. Plots Design

A. Around the bed

Besides setting most of the scenes at home, I also set the other central place around the bed. Compared to various spaces like a kitchen, and a living room in a house, a bedroom is much of a private site where people feel relaxed. The bed is our comfort zone where we rest, recharge our energy, and get calm. In bed, we are not armed; some people might even be used to being naked when they are in bed. In addition, because we are unprepared for it, sleeping time may be the most vulnerable period for people. During sleep time, the environment has less light, and we do not have a clear consciousness; hence, people must take the situation passively for anything happening around us while sleeping. We all have the experience of getting scared while sleeping like alarm clock sounds or sirens from outside. Those unexpected noises from outside are typically not pleasant for us, and people's health might become harmful if they are exposed to this sleep situation for a long time.

B. The protagonist

Gavin, the protagonist, is a sunny and good-looking young man. Although he can only afford to rent a cheap apartment, he has a lovely girlfriend, a decent job and is looking forward to starting a new life in his new home. Nevertheless, a character this good always runs into trouble in horror films for no apparent reason, and Gavin is no exception. Although this role setting sounds frustrating, while watching him, the audience can easily have a good impression and emotional projection of this positive role. Even in the end, the viewer can feel bad for Gavin when the supernatural drags him into the shadows. To

conclude, the purpose of this role is to make the audience emotionally connect with Gavin; their emotion will involve deeper into the plot while having mood swings with Gavin's experience.

C. The roommate

In my video, the setting of the roommate is a person who doesn't talk much and has an unkempt appearance. This appearance tends to give viewers the impression that a character won't be a favorable one at a first glimpse in most movies; this person must be secretly doing something terrible... etc. Hence, I followed this stereotype while asking the roommate not only to look weird but to execute enigmatic and bizarre religious rituals late at night so that audiences could consolidate their first impression of roommates. Because the roommate's first impression of the audience is negative, the audience should be curious about the roommate's reaction when Gavin forcibly pushes the roommate's door while screaming at him not to make noise at night. To extend the audience's curiosity, the roommate stands in the same position in the dark, disorderly room for a few seconds, then slowly rotates around. I expect the audience's curiosity will accumulate in these few seconds, and they might even prepare for a jump scare if the roommate immediately turns around with a terrifying face. Nevertheless, although the roommate does not do a jump scare at this point when he turns around, he remains silent, and his severe and weird expression still puts deep psychological pressure on Gavin and the audience.

D. Taiwan religious element

In my home country-Taiwan, religious belief is pluralistic and free for everyone, but traditional Chinese Taoist and Buddhist beliefs still represent the majority; on the street side, you can always see Taoist and Buddhist temples. Regarding Taiwan's religious beliefs, it is essential to note that many Taiwanese believers have combined Taoism and Buddhism. For example, we can see both Buddhist and Taoist gods on the altar of most Taiwanese families, or they would worship the Buddha with incense sticks (incense sticks were initially Taoist supplies).

Figure 4. Taoist temple in Taiwan.

Figure 5. Taiwanese believer worship and pray in a Taoist temple.

Figure 6. A Buddhist temple in Taiwan.

From Boyce, https://loloto.pixnet.net/blog/post/32276525

Along with the foregoing, the atmosphere I grew up in is distinctive. My grandfather is a professional Taoist fortune teller, and my father also inherited this family skill. They utilized the fortune-telling method "Ba-Zi," which means "eight characters." Using this method, the fortune-teller needs the person's birth year, month, day, and hour and then converts the birth details into eight characters to predict their fortune. Many clients stopped by our home while my grandfather and father were working and inquired about my future. Therefore, our home's setting differs from most families: we did not have much furniture in the living room. Instead, a big shrine dedicated to various gods, along with candles, incense sticks, an incense burner, a turtle shell, several ancient copper coins, and many other Taoist religious instruments.

My thesis committee chair, Rachel, always encouraged me to make some video that "only I can make"; Consequently, I gave a distinctive flavor to this horror movie by creating a strange atmosphere and drawing on my upbringing and experiences with Taiwanese religion.

E. Netflix & chill

When writing a story, numerous partners questioned why I added this plot. The reason is that it happened to me! It was a real experience that made me chill down my spine! My partner and I frequently went to the movies when I was in Taiwan. We both like horror movies, and we used to sit in the last row, which had the best watching spot in the showroom. Once, we went to watch a Japanese horror movie, and we sat in the old spot as usual. When the film was halfway through, I heard someone eating popcorn behind us. I felt the sound was very close because the sound was as clear as if someone was chewing

popcorn next to my ear. After turning around, I repeatedly surveyed the area, but only one wall existed. I noticed that my boyfriend also looked back several times; I asked, did you also hear that? He panicked a little and said yes. I heard the chewing popcorn sound, which was so close like someone was eating popcorn behind me. Every time we looked back, the sound stopped, and a little while later, it occurred again! I don't know if it was because of any supernatural entity in our seat area or was the scare. I felt colder and colder; the temperature was getting lower and lower, and I started to tremble and shiver. After a while, we decided we couldn't take it any longer and would leave before the movie ended. Many seasoned authors advised beginning writers to create a work that horrified them, so I added this plot because I experienced it, which was scary. I remember all the details that happened very profoundly; what was behind us? The chill and the fear of the unknown made us jump out of our seats. As many people like to eat popcorn when watching movies, it is terrifying to hear someone chewing popcorn behind and wanting to join the party, but when you turn around, nobody is there. Therefore, although no ghost exists in this scene, it has already begun to pave the way for terror.

F. Layers of progressive frightening scenes

In this video, Gavin often encounters supernatural phenomena occurring hierarchically rather than randomly. In the beginning, Gavin just heard various strange sounds, but the severity of the supernatural forces trying to harm Gavin became intense with time.

The primary goal of this level of design is to increase audience anxiety. At the same time, the audience watches but also starts to see many dangerous supernatural phenomena in the film, from the touch and sound from the beginning to visible ghosts. As the story

progresses, the audience might start to worry about Gavin, wonder what he will encounter next time, and how he will cope with these horrible situations.

E. The Twists

I like stories with a twist, no matter what genre of the work; it invigorates the piece and reveals the author's thorough conception. The twist must be reasonable to echo from the start and at the end; the truth can only be known at the last second. So, Readers will applaud till the very end: Ah, that's all.

In this story, I created two turns near the conclusion; their time points are close to each other but still mutually established.

1. The first twist

I deliberately made the roommate's appearance and religious behavior strange, giving the audience the impression that this role is not a good person. Additionally, their home becomes peaceful for a few days after Gavin discards the roommate's Taoist instrument, which furthers the audience's belief that the roommate is to blame for all the strange occurrences that have previously occurred. However, near the end of the video, Gavin is seriously attacked by supernatural forces while trying to escape his room. But even though Gavin tries his best to reach the door, he still can't get the doorknob. The audience is expected to be as shocked and nervous as Gavin at this time. (The audience may wish they could reach the screen and help Gavin open the door.) They are as anxious as Gavin and eager to do anything to escape from the supernatural force. However, even though

Gavin has been climbing forward, why is the distance between him and the door still not getting closer?

Both Gavin and the audience are eager for someone to solve this situation. Concurrently, the door suddenly opened from the outside, and the roommate appeared heroic as he stood outside. I created this twist mainly to make the audience suddenly realize: Oh! It turns out the roommate is not a bad guy! Although his looks and behavior are strange, this time, he still appears and can help Gavin! The audience may feel a little embarrassed when they watch this because they consider the roommate's outward look; even if he seemed to behave strangely, so what? Come on, roommate! Please save Gavin!

2. **The second twist**

When the audience realized the roommate was not as bad as they thought, I soon prepared the second twist, forcing them to reconsider their freshly formed beliefs.

The roommate finally failed to save Gavin, and supernatural forces dragged Gavin into the darkness. Afterward, the roommate looked disappointed. When the audience sees his face, they would feel sorry for his disappointment and then must accept this unfortunate outcome. Nevertheless, after the audience thinks that the story is almost over, even after he fails to save his roommate, the camera continues to capture the action, thus may arouse the audience's curiosity: Hey, Gavin is dead; why should we continue watching the roommate? Soon a group photo was displayed on the screen, with several people and Gavin on it. However, the faces of others have been marked with an x on their head, except Gavin. The audience might be perplexed right now. What does this group photo mean? Why were everyone's faces marked except Gavin's?

Then the camera turned to the roommate's face, and his features broke into a wild, vicious smile. Then he giggles, Ha ha ha, this is the last one, and then marks a big x on Gavin's face. It came out that the roommate was the one who started the whole thing, contrary to what the audience initially believed. Audience! You were right. The roommate's appearance and strange religious rituals showed he was a bad guy and killed everyone in the group photo.

Here, we don't need to delve into why the roommate killed so many people and his methods for murder because this is the essence of the horror genre; as I highlighted earlier: fear comes from the unknown.

The video ended here while leaving three suspense for the audience:

1. The open ending: Why did the roommate kill everyone in the photo?

2. How did he kill those people? Have each of those individuals resided in this flat? Did he use Taoist rituals to conjure up the supernatural to kill people?

3. Who are those people in the photo? Somehow, as the author, I would only answer the third question: I have lived in Blacksburg for almost two years, and many gracious people took part in my earlier filmmaking projects; this group photo has two interpretations: 1. I indirectly created a "Pai-Hsueh Universe" in Blacksburg, no matter how cheerful those people are in my other videos, in the following story, they are all dead. 2. Contrary to the previous point, I captured this group photo to express my gratitude to those that assisted me. This graduation thesis video records the memories of our cooperation and friendship in Blacksburg.

Chapter Four: Filming Production

A. Scene Design

1. Gavin's room

From the scene of Gavin's room, we can see it is bright and tidy. There are three reasons for this room design: First, I want to set Gavin's image as sunny and cheerful. He had recently relocated and was getting ready to start a new life. The audience can start to feel sympathy for Gavin after witnessing this scenario because most individuals have gone through the experience of moving. However, starting a new life in a strange environment would be exciting but timid. Hence, by organizing the room, Gavin and the audience also prepare for the mindset. Second, the audience can see the furnishings in Gavin's room and understand that he is a straightforward and realistic young man: a clean and simple bed, a guitar (indicating that he loves music), and some electronic appliances as well as some other sports stuff, making Gavin look like a young man has full of energy and embraces his life. But if such a lovely young man encounters strange things in this new environment, the audience would feel more concerned and upset for him, but the worst thing is there is nothing they can do to help Gavin. The last reason is to contrast with the roommate's messy and dim room; it suggests right away that Gavin has a positive identity and is always looking on the bright side, while his roommate's messy and weird appearance doesn't look like a good person.

Figure 7. Gavin's room: Clean and bright.

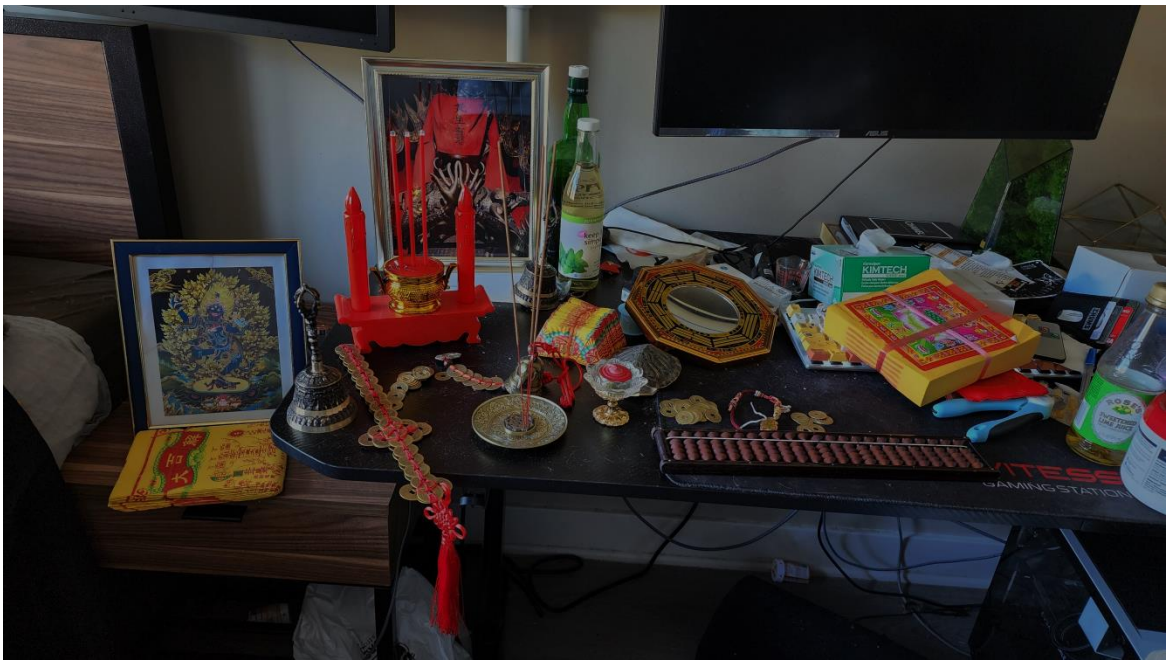

Figure 8. Roommate's room: Dim and messy.

2. Bare Feet

When Gavin thrust his roommate's room because he cannot tolerate the roommate's religious ritual's late-night noise, the audience can observe the close-up shot showing that Gavin walked out of the room barefoot, even though there were indoor slippers beside his bed.

The design concept of the barefoot indicates Gavin's anger caused by the noise last night, which awakened him. And this kind of situation has happened many times; Gavin often can't sleep well; therefore, he doesn't care much while upset even though he usually wears indoor slippers at home. Regardless of whether his roommate will be mad because of his sudden intrusion, he intends to ask him not to make any noise at night.

Compared with wearing shoes/ indoor slippers, barefoot has several meanings: 1. Danger: without the protection of shoes, Gavin's bare feet make him seem defenseless, which is also the starting point for paving the way for a dangerous atmosphere. 2. Walking barefoot is slower. When Gavin enters his roommate's room in the dim hallway, the audience wonders whether he will be in danger or is anxious that he won't be able to flee quickly. But the tension and worry from the audience are what this scene needs.

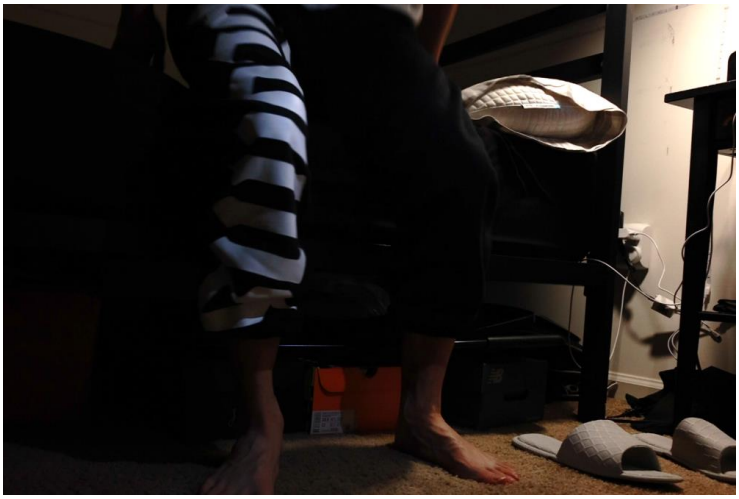

Figure 9. Bare feet.

3. The God images

Figure 10. The God images: Kālī(काली) and Mahakala(महाकाल).
Kali's image is a screenshot from the movie "Incantation."
Mahakala's image is from Wikipedia.

In the film, roommates are worshipping these two Gods. On the left in this picture is Kālī(काली)(This image is from the Taiwanese movie "Incantation (咒)"), while on the right is a Mahakala(महाकाल). They are husband and wife. They are the gods of destruction, and while they have many strong forces to keep the world going, most laws can't contain them.

They are not evil gods, they show the power of destruction, and many studies indicate that their believers sacrificed many living people or blood. Additionally, these two gods' appearances don't seem as kind as most other gods. Take the dark sky in the picture as an example. He has dark skin, many arms, three eyes, and a fierce face, holding a human head and a blade in his hand and stepping on someone, surrounded by flames. Its appearance is

daunting. Hence, I utilized these two images in this video as objects for the roommate's worship, even though they are not evil gods.

4. People in capes and masks

4-1: The outfit

I enjoyed shooting the following part. The idea came from my friend's nightmare, and I think it would be interesting to visualize.

There were seven "people" standing around Gavin's bed. They dress in wired masks and black and red capes. In the original content of my friend's nightmare, there are just many shadows around the bed. Nevertheless, it would be challenging to imagine it since there will be scenes in which the "shadow" needs to chase Gavin and grab his leg. Therefore, I was inspired by BLACKPINK's music video: Pink Venom. Considering the initial scene, many people wear capes and sit around the stage.

Figure 10, 11. People in capes.

Screenshots from BLACKPINK's music video "Pink Venom."

There are frequently some suspenseful sequences with people wearing capes, so I adapted this outfit idea to my video.

Besides wearing dark capes, I conceived and created masks for the actors in the last scene.

Figure 12, 13. Spell on masks.

Figure 14. Fulu (符箓).

The base color of masks is dark yellow. Whereas I wrote various spells on the masks. The inspiration comes from "符箓," "Fulu," it is a Daoist magic symbol written or painted in red or black on dark yellow color papers.

Most of the time, the purpose and content of Fulu are written spells to invoke particular gods to ensure the safety of users or drive away evil forces. However, in the last scene, the people in capes call evil forces who try to hurt Gavin, so the spells on masks are not for protection; they are spells to call dark evil, ghosts, and misfortune to come.

6-2: The spell

In the same scene, we can hear the people chanting spells while standing around Gavin's bed. The spells are from "大悲咒," "Nīlakaṇṭha Dhāraṇī." It is one of the standard mantras that monks repeat in the morning and evening in monasteries. The content concerns Guanyin Bodhisattva's compassion for all beings, except for catastrophes and ill luck. However, in this video, the context is calling evil force, and I don't want the audience to be familiar with Nīlakaṇṭha Dhāraṇī and to know about it as soon as they hear it, so the actors were chanting the spell text backward.

The concept is similar to many horror films; hanging the cross upside down mocks the gods and has no protective or uplifting force. In addition, the audience can never realize that the origin of these spells was Nīlakaṇṭha Dhāraṇī when they heard it.

5. The female ghost stands aside the bad and the inspiration

The position where this female ghost stands, the front edge of the bed, is inspired by the classic Japanese horror "Ju-On." I was mesmerized when I saw the scene in Ju-on because,

as highlighted before, the bed symbolizes privacy as well as safety that protects all our vulnerabilities. Hence, I utilized a similar setting in this scene. The ghost not only stood by the bed but also bent down to look at Gavin, which, in addition to frightening Gavin, rendered him immobile and escaped from such a close distance and sight. The differences in this scene between mine and Ju-On's are the female ghost hurting Gavin and the looking of the female ghost.

7-1: Hurting Gavin

In the movie "Ju-On," the ghost stands beside the bed and looks at the sufferer. But in my video, Gavin's situation was getting worse. So, at this point, Gavin can see and hear the supernatural entity, and the supernatural power even wants to hurt him. Thus, the female ghost chocks Gavin's neck hard and eventually vanishes after Gavin removes her clenched fingers.

7-2: The female ghost's makeup idea

Additionally, with the typical all-white makeup foundation and dark color around the eyes, East and Western cultures have the custom of giving money to the dead. In the West, coins are placed on the eyelids of the dead, whereas in East Asia, people would burn cash as a memorial. To combine the characteristics of East Asia and the West, I changed the coins on eyelids into ancient coins from China. I strung four antique copper coins with an oriental-inspired red thread. The size of four copper coins is not only wide enough to cover the eyelids, but also four is an unlucky number in East Asia because its pronunciation is similar to death. Also, the female ghost's lips that split to the cheeks refer

to the famous Japanese urban legend, the Kuchisake-onna (口裂け女), the "Slit-Mouthed Woman," Blackened teeth are inspired by ancient Japanese women, who made having black teeth a sign of social prestige and attractiveness. But I also adopted this idea because black teeth make the female ghost look even more terrifying.

Figure 15. Slit-Mouthed Woman (the Kuchisake-onna 口裂け女). A screenshot of the movie "口裂け女."

Figure 16. Western custom: put coins on the eyelids of the dead. A screenshot of the movie "From Hell."

Figure 17. A Japanese woman who blackens her teeth. From http://ameblo.jp/walovem/entry-12639849297.html.

Figure 18. The illustration of Female ghost makeup design.

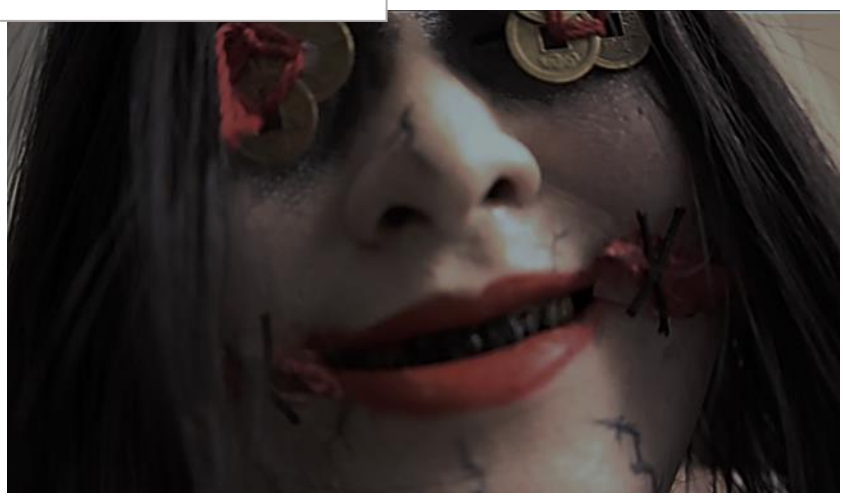

Figure 19. Final female ghost appearance.

6. First perspective

In the following video, there are many shots from the first-person perspective. In many shooting video games using the first perspective, the viewer can fully immerse in the scene while watching. In this video, the audience will find that many first perspective shots are shaken the fact that almost all those perspectives come from Gavin's panic or from the time he tried to escape, so the fast as well as shaking shot, coupled with Gavin's gasps, can make the audience feel the character's panic mood.

Chapter Five: Future and Improvement

This video is my first time shooting a short film that lasts more than 10 minutes, and the film also contains many different scenes, so even though I had previously produced some videos and collaborated with numerous skilled artists, the previous experience cannot be compared with the shooting process and difficulty of this time.

People's feedback was good when I first shared the story idea and the storyboard. Nevertheless, afterward, my committee and various professors began to have concerns because whenever I talked about my storyboard, they needed regular explanations of each scene and time to comprehend what was happening. However, the truth is when I make a video, I will not have a chance to explain it to the audience while they are watching it, so I want to be aware of how to connect each scene perfectly visually, like how to let the audience know that the two terrorist incidents happened on different days, and why Gavin has had so many terrible things at home, why hasn't he moved away? Simply said, I need to present each connection with images, not by my explanation.

However, when I realized the importance of "how to connect each event visually," there was little time left. Although I solved this problem in the end, I will need to pay close attention to this when I make videos in the future, especially longer and more complex ones. The earlier I prepare; each connection will make the whole story more reasonable and complete.

Additionally, sound design is the soul of horror films; adding sound effects to various scenes will bring people into a more nervous mood and some suspense. Although I was using many open-source sound effects from sound libraries this time, I would like to be able to contribute to sound design the next time. I will record each soundtrack so that the sound effects are more integrated with the content of the scene and more original.

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