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Dantalion

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Dantalion

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in
Film Production

by

David LeBlanc

B.A. University of New Orleans, 2008

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Abstract

In this paper, I will cover the step by step process of making my thesis film, *Dantalion*. These steps include writing, directing, production design, makeup, cinematography, editing, and sound. I will primarily focus on the pre-production work done for each one of these departments and how it affected the outcome of the finished film. I will then evaluate the outcome to determine the success of the project.

Keywords: Comedy, Horror, David LeBlanc, Dantalion, Evil Dead 2, Army of Darkness, Sam Raimi, Special FX Makeup, Prosthetics, Demon, Hamlet, Shakespeare

Chapter 1

Introduction

Why do we watch movies? Everyone has a different answer to this question, but my answer is simple. I watch movies to enjoy the spectacle. I want to see things I've never seen before and that aren't found on this Earth. You can keep your *Dances With Wolves* (Costner, 1990), *The Notebook* (Cassavetes, 2004), and *The Manchurian Candidate* (Demme, 2004). I want *Return of the Jedi* (Marquand, 1983), *Predator* (McTiernan, 1987), and *Dawn of the Dead* (Snyder, 2004). All my childhood, I spent my free time watching the *Star Wars* Trilogy over and over. When I got to high school, I became a purveyor of movies with amazing creature fx suits, even if the movies were ultimately bad. (I'm looking at you, *AVP: Alien vs. Predator* (Anderson, 2004).) Why couldn't I design, fabricate, and paint rubber suits that actors would slip into to become a totally different being? What was stopping me? After finishing undergrad in 2008, I went to Los Angeles to become a certified makeup artist and have been doing makeup ever since.

Along with my love for makeup fx is my love for comedy. *Ghostbusters* (Reitman, 1984), *Evil Dead 2* (Raimi, 1987), *Coming to America* (Landis, 1988): these are the films that will always have a special place in my heart because they meld transformational makeup and humor together. For my thesis, I wanted to do the same. Using *Evil Dead 2* and *Army of Darkness* (Raimi, 1992) as the jumping off point, I wrote *Dantalion*.

The idea for *Dantalion* came from an Amazon.com review of a book by Thomas Morawetz titled *Making Faces, Playing God : Identity and the Art of Transformational Makeup*. The review is long gone now, but stated that the book went into the psychology of prosthetic character actors and how the makeup makes it easier for them to get into character. That one line sparked an idea. What if one of these prosthetic character actors couldn't break out of character? What if they looked in the mirror only to see their on-screen persona? I love abnormal psychology and think it's a great place to find a fresh

idea for a film. Heck, the film I made before *Dantalion*, *Orange Appeal* (2011), is about kleptomania, so writing a screenplay about an actor with split personality disorder was right up my alley.

For *Orange Appeal*, most of the attention was spent on directing and most of the budget was spent on craft services. *Orange Appeal* was lit intentionally flat and was shot in one location where most of the set dressing was provided. Not a bad thing, but I wanted to have a much higher production value on *Dantalion*. I knew I wanted to go much further not just with makeup, but with cinematography and production design as well. To do that would cost money. To offset this, I tried to use every resource at UNO's disposal: gear, locations, actors, and crew. In the following chapters, I will discuss the filmmaking process in detail in relation to the following factors: writing, directing, production design, makeup, cinematography, editing, and sound. I will then take into account peer reviews along with my perception of how true I stayed to my original vision of the film to determine the overall success of the film.

Chapter 2

Writing

Dantalion follows Will Addison, a monster film actor that is always in heavy prosthetic makeup. After a disheartening conversation about the last shot with his director, Henry, Will confesses to his makeup artist and roommate, Steve, that he wants to go back to the theater, where he would have creative control over his role. Steve tries to remove Will's makeup, but Will fidgets throughout the conversation, resulting in Steve leaving and Will having to take the bus home.

While at the bus stop, Will sees an audition flier for William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. When he arrives home, he pulls his copy of *Hamlet* from his bookshelf, walks to his mirror, and begins to practice the famous monologue, "To be or not to be." He looks down at the script and back into the mirror to find his on-screen persona, the demon Dantalion, staring back at him. Dantalion's hands pop from the mirror and choke Will. Will manages to escape and retreats to the kitchen. Dantalion appears and explains that there is no money in theater and that without Dantalion, Will has no way to make a living. Dantalion asks, "How are you going to afford new plates?" Plates wizz by and crash all around Will. Steve hears all the noise and comes into the kitchen to see Will throwing plates on the ground. Will comes up with an excuse for his behavior and the two go back to sleep.

Days later, Steve asks about what really happened that night. Will hands Steve the flier for the *Hamlet* audition. Steve points out that Will can't do both theater and film and that he must make a choice. The morning of the audition, Will wakes up to Dantalion cooking waffles in his bedroom. Will asks what time it is to discover that he's late for his call time and possibly his audition. He storms out of bed and into his car.

While en-route to his audition, Steve calls Will stating that Henry is going crazy and that Will

has to come to set immediately. Will declares that he's going to the audition and begs Steve to stall Henry. Just as Henry is about to make a production assistant the new Dantalion, Steve points out that the makeup will only fit Will's face. Henry gives Steve an hour to get Will in makeup and on set or Will is fired.

Will makes it to the backstage area of the auditions only to be met by Dantalion. Dantalion says that he only wishes Will luck and to “break a leg.” Dantalion kicks Will's leg and there is an audible “crack.” Dantalion disappears and Steve finds Will crumpled and whimpering on the floor. Steve picks him up, ready to take him back to set. Will demands to stay and walks out onto the stage, ready for his audition.

Will says his name and what role he's auditioning for to the director of *Hamlet*. He begins, but what once was a monologue is now a dialogue as Dantalion appears, reciting lines from the play. The two go back and forth until they meet in the center of the stage. They stare each other down until Dantalion chokes Will. Will struggles for a moment before kneeling Dantalion in the groin. Will continues with the monologue, but is cut off by the director.

Will hobbles off the stage, but is stopped by the director. Dantalion is nowhere to be found. He offers Will the part for Hamlet's father's ghost, but it would require heavy makeup. Will reluctantly takes the role. The director sees Will's reaction and states that he lets his actors have creative control over their role. Will straightens up and gladly accepts the part.

The writing of *Dantalion* began in May 2011. Let's start with the givens. I wanted to make a film that required prosthetic makeup that followed an actor haunted by the character that he was currently portraying, and utilize the screenwriting principle of economy in order to write a more unified story and streamline every aspect of production.

The four types of economy include economy of character, location, time, and writing. Economy of character means that characters should play multiple roles in the story. Will was my conflicted

protagonist. *Dantalion* was not only my main antagonist, but also the externalization of Will's fears of switching from film to theater. Steve, the major relationship character to Will, was not only Will's makeup artist, but also his roommate and friend, so it makes sense that he shows up throughout the movie to check on Will. By adhering to economy of character, not only do we not get lost in a huge number of characters, but it limits the number of actors that have to be cast/fed/paid/rehearsed once production begins.

Economy of location means that your movie should be limited in the number of locations. For *Dantalion*, there were a total of six different locations: the sound stage of the horror movie, the makeup room, a bus stop, Will's house, the interior of Will's car, and the theater. By boiling down the story to the essential locations to tell the story, the audience doesn't get lost in the movie world and it limits the amount of company moves and set dressing time needed for the production.

Economy of time means that time needed for the story to be resolved should be finite and not nebulous. The way I achieved this was with the use of a "time lock." For *Dantalion*, the time lock is that the audition for *Hamlet* is just a few days after Will finds the flier for it, so he is forced to take action within those days. By doing so, a sense of urgency is created when the end of the time lock is reached, which elevates tension.

Last is economy of writing, which ultimately means to be concise with your description of action and dialogue so that there is a good amount of white space in your screenplay. I also gave myself a cap of twenty pages for the script, feeling that any more than that would be too much for me to handle while in school. With that said, the final script was eighteen pages in length and the final cut was roughly eighteen minutes in length with credits.

The first draft of *Dantalion* opened with a horror scene that was an homage to the *Evil Dead* series: using the same character names and lines, having it set in an old cabin that becomes possessed and laughs, having a clock that strikes at midnight, blood that splashes on the actresses face, etc. Once

Dantalion and Henry appear, it's revealed that the first horror scene is actually a movie within the movie, which I believe is a great device to grab the attention of the viewer and set the tone of the film. These two scenes didn't change very much during the writing process.

The makeup room scene that followed did go through many iterations. Every rewrite of the scene basically established that Will hated his job and that he wanted to go back to theater. Originally, Will cited three different movies that he had been in before and the script would cut away to each corresponding set. While these cutaways were funny and fit with the tone, they were the only time these cutaways would happen and it began to bloat the beginning of the movie. If *Dantalion* were a feature, they could have stayed, but it's not and it would have taken at least six hours to shoot the three cutaways. Ultimately, I cut them out.

Originally, the bus stop scene was intended to make the audience aware that Dantalion would be haunting Will. I thought it was fitting that when Will was given a way out of film, the *Hamlet* audition, Dantalion would surface because his life was basically threatened. My professor, Erik Hansen, and other peers argued that since Will had not really made a choice or taken any action yet, Dantalion's reveal should come later in the next scene when he begins to recite lines from *Hamlet*. I agree that this works better for two reasons. First, in the *Evil Dead* series and many other supernatural horror films, great evil is released by recitation of lines from a tome. This is mirrored in the final draft of the script. More importantly, by reciting and memorizing these lines, Will is taking his first active step towards theater and away from film. This is in direct opposition to what Dantalion wants, for Will to stay in film. Therefore, Dantalion must appear to stop him. In other words, Will's action should directly influence what happens next and further his goal.

The first scene inside Will's house also didn't change too much from the first draft and has two direct references to *Evil Dead 2*. That film's protagonist, Ash, looks into a mirror to find himself staring back. At closer look, the mirror image thrusts through the mirror to choke the real Ash. This is

to symbolize that Ash has been possessed by evil. In *Dantalion*, Will recites *Hamlet* and looks into the mirror to see Dantalion staring back at him. Dantalion thrusts his hands through the mirror and chokes Will. I use this also to show that Dantalion is really a part of Will and that's why he's first revealed in a mirror.

The second reference to *Evil Dead 2* in the scene is of Dantalion throwing plates at Will in the kitchen. The scene in *Evil Dead 2* is when Ash's hand becomes possessed by evil and begins smashing plate after plate over his head. Originally, I wrote Dantalion casting a curse to possess Will's hand to do the same exact thing, but my friend and cinematographer, Andrew Bryan, argued that physical pain like that should be left until later in the script in order to raise the stakes. I agreed and changed it to what it is now.

The next makeup room scene changed slightly with each draft. Originally, Will confessed that he was being haunted by Dantalion and that was it. Steve, in this scene, was more light hearted, but still gave Will trouble about being haunted by a rubber mask. With each new draft, Steve evolved more into an asshole than the joker I originally imagined him to be, so I dropped the joking and turned him into the voice of reality for Will. By the last draft, Will only confesses that he's decided to audition for *Hamlet* and possibly lose his job, which is a big event in his arc. This scene also introduces the time lock for when he has to choose whether to be on set or go to the audition, which is crucial for the rest of the story.

In the next scene, Will wakes up late because Dantalion unplugs his alarm clock. From this point on in the script, the multiple drafts vary wildly. The first three have him run to set where he and Dantalion start a fist fight as onlooking set workers see only Will punching himself, much like *Fight Club* (Fincher, 1999). He is then fired and doesn't really have much option other than to go to his audition, where Dantalion just follows him around the stage, saying nothing. The fighting scene was very funny to me, but left Will as a weak protagonist because he was left with no decision to make.

Also, Dantalion just following Will around the stage was boring.

Ultimately, I made Will choose whether to go to the audition or go to set. By doing so, his actions have consequences and also say something about how much he wants his goal of being back in theater, making him a stronger character. Once reaching the audition and having his leg broken by Dantalion, Will is at his lowest point. He has given it all up: his health, his wealth, and his sanity in order to pursue his goal. If he obtains his goal, the role of Hamlet, it's a greater the victory because of what he has gone through.

The climax of the movie was always the audition. I knew Will would recite "to be or not to be" from the get go, but just reciting the lines was not very exciting. Why couldn't the monologue be turned into a dialogue? The monologue is basically Hamlet arguing with himself on whether he should kill himself or not, much like Will deciding to pursue film or theater. I met with my friend and lead, Ben Matheny, and we determined which lines in the monologue could be split up for point and counterpoint. I then assigned the lines to Will and Dantalion, writing action in between the back and forth of their new dialogue.

For the ending, the first and last drafts both have Will not getting the role of Hamlet, but being offered the role of Hamlet's father's ghost. I did this for two reasons. First, I don't like endings that are completely wrapped up, like Will getting the part of Hamlet. Everything seems too perfect that way. Getting the role of Hamlet's father's ghost is ironic, in that he would be back in makeup and make for a great twist. Will also gets to practice his craft even if it's not how he imagined, which is the point of the script.

Directing

Henry Griffin, artist in residence, is known for teaching that directing is ninety percent casting, so that's where I'll start. All of my previous movies had been cast by asking talented actors that I felt fit the role if they were available during my shoot dates. If the answer was yes, I'd offer the role to them. I feel validated with these decisions because many directors echo this sentiment, including David Cronenberg. "Get good actors and let them be good."

With *Dantalion*, I had already envisioned Ben Matheny as Will and Matt Martinez as Dantalion. Ben had already been in about half of my movies, so we already knew how to work with each other. For Matt, I had seen movies and plays that he had been in over the last two years and had been impressed with his work. All I had to do to was casually mention the main roles in my movie and they basically foamed at the mouth. I held the roles above their heads for about a month, showing them each new draft of the script, telling them I was going to have auditions, and finally just offered them the roles after having a few drinks together. This ritual of meeting together every week and going over different aspects of the script went on for about three months before I shot.

For the other roles in my movie, I held auditions about a month and a half before shooting that were posted through the websites Craigslist and Facebook. These auditions weren't as fruitful as I would have hoped for. Five actors came to read for the roles of Steve and Henry over the course of three days. The only actor that stood out was Mason Joiner who I cast as Henry. Henry was originally written as a man in his late thirties/early forties, but Mason nailed it and I knew he was talented from seeing his work in my peers' movies. So I rewrote the role of Henry, transforming him from a straight to DVD director to a pretentious film school graduate. Because of this, I was wary of casting more actors in their mid-twenties for fear of the movie looking like a student film (even though it is).

Aware of this fact, I approached another professor, Danny Retz, about the role of the theater director (which would change to Danny). Danny had already made an appearance in Lorne Boni's thesis film from 2008, was an older gentleman in his late fifties or early sixties, and we had a good working relationship. I assured him that filming wouldn't take more than a full morning for him and he gladly accepted the role.

The last of the major roles was the character of Steve. I had no leads or any good auditions for the role. I went to Ben Matheny and asked him about a mutual actor acquaintance, Zac Rogers. Zac had been in Ben's last movie, *Nessun Dorma* (2011), so if anybody knew whether he was a good actor, it would be Ben. He vouched for Zac and mentioned to him that I was shooting a film that he should read for. I scheduled the audition and offered the role to Zac once I felt that he could take direction.

For the remaining roles, I simply asked Jacob McManus and Chelsea Hebert, both of whom I had worked with before, and they accepted. The same is true of Dawn Spatz, who portrayed the PA in the script.

So, if casting is ninety percent of directing, what about the remaining ten percent? To that I'll quote David Cronenberg again. "With any actor, there's a lot of prep, a lot of directing happens before you say 'action' and 'cut.'" I'm a big believer of the through-line, which is something Henry Griffin drilled into my head during undergrad. The through-line, according to Lenore DeKoven, is "the articulation in writing of the director's vision of the total work." To put it simply, it's what I'm trying to say with film. My through-line for *Dantalion* was the same as before I wrote the script and reads as follows:

If one is unfulfilled in their current line of work, no amount of financial compensation will ever change that. In order to be happy, one must actively seek employment in a field of work that brings them contentment and satisfaction.

With this in mind, every decision I made as a director was influenced on whether it would support this statement. Also, if anyone were to ask me to explain my movie, I never had to rack my brain to articulate it. I already knew and could spit out my through-line.

As stated before, I met with my lead actors once a week for three months, discussing the characters, their motivations, and possible changes to the script that were fitting. During the two weeks before shooting, I held tech scouts where I showed the rough blocking to my department heads. The week before shooting, Ben, Matt, and I rehearsed and went through all of their blocking, which was relatively easy to figure out and translate. The only exception was the audition scene. I couldn't shot-list the scene until it was blocked and I couldn't block it until I had access to the theater, which wasn't until half a week before shooting. Once we were allowed in the theater, blocking took an hour and we rehearsed the scene for two days. Since this scene was the climax of the movie, I felt it was important to spend more time on it when compared to the rest of the movie. It was also going to be the longest shooting day, due to all the camera moves that were planned, so I didn't want to hold the shoot up because we were still trying to figure out performances.

Many directors live next to their camera's monitor. Others never look through the camera. The two films before *Dantalion*, you couldn't pry me away from the monitor. I know exactly how things look and never have to ask to watch playback, which wastes time on set. Also, when I edit the movie, I'm not left wondering whether I got everything the way I wanted until I watch the dailies. For *Dantalion*, watching the monitor was almost impossible for the entire film, either because we shot two cameras simultaneously or it was impractical to set up a separate monitor in certain locations, but it didn't bother me. I trusted my director of photography, Andrew Bryan. We had discussed in detail what I wanted (to be discussed later) and we knew how each other work, since he had done my two prior movies before this. To have the luxury of trusting him and being able to walk away from the monitor was very liberating and meant I only had to deal with my actors and their performances.

Dantalion has been the movie I've spent the most time working on pre-production. It was also the smoothest run set I've been on. Sure, my 1st AD, Wendy Granger, definitely had something to do with it, but I also believe that all the work I did in pre-production directly correlated with how the set was run. I found myself half the time on set with nothing to do other than waiting on the next lighting and camera setup after talking to my actors. I'm so used to always having something to do as a director on set, usually because I'm also my own 1st AD and art department. Also, I didn't have to give too much direction between shots because the performances were where I wanted them to be by the first or second take. As a result, we did a lot of series, repeating action over and over without cutting, until we had a take with perfect focus. Was this how it felt to actually just be the director and not worry about any other department? At first, I thought something was wrong, that I wasn't doing my job correctly. I realized the next day that this is how it should be if things are going well and that's a great feeling. If I direct again, that's how I want it to be.

Production Design

From the get go, I knew I wanted to be my own production designer. I have previous experience as an art director and production designer on other student films, as well as my own, so I'm very confident in my art department skills. What I needed was an art director that would make sure I had everything I needed on time and under budget. Enter Rebeccah Rodrigues-Metlen. Becky is normally a 1st AD, but I asked her to be the taskmaster of my green, yet talented art department, which was great. Becky is also the captain of the New Orleans Women's Rugby Club, so she can be intimidating when necessary, but also knows how to manage a team.

From there, I determined the color palettes for each of the main characters and doled out the information to the rest of the art department. I decided that Will should wear blues, which would be contrasted by the reds of Dantalion's mask and lighting. Both of these characters which share browns in their wardrobe since they were two sides of the same coin. For Steve, I wanted him to wear what makeup artists traditionally wear...all black. The reason for that is because makeup eventually gets onto your clothes as a makeup artist and by wearing black, you don't see it. Also, I wanted Steve to be the voice of reason and be unbiased, so he didn't share any color with any other character. For Henry, the color pallet was less important, but most of his wardrobe was red, paralleling Dantalion's colors. What was more important to me was that his wardrobe screamed that he is a director.

When I think “director,” the first image that pops into my head is George Lucas wearing his infamous flannel shirts. The next image that follows is Rob Reiner wearing an Armed Forces baseball cap at the beginning of *This is Spinal Tap* (Reiner, 1984). Put those two images together and you have Henry's wardrobe choice. For Dantalion's costume, I approached Laura Sumich. I told her that I wanted it to be brown and tan tones, layered, and very similar in nature to the Tusken Raiders in the

Star Wars films. She made a rendering, which I approved, and scheduled a fitting with Matt.

A week before shooting, I went to see the costume itself and Laura brought out each layer separately with the disclaimer that some of the pieces still needed to be dyed and distressed. I wasn't worried about that. I couldn't imagine how all these pieces would look together on Matt. (Note to self. Schedule a final fitting.) I had to trust in Laura's abilities. When Matt put on the costume, my fears were put to rest since it looked better than I could have imagined.

For the set, I used as many locations that I had free access to, whether through the school or friends, and added set dressings to fit my needs. For the makeup room, I used one of the dressing rooms in the Performing Arts Center. I specifically wanted it to look like the dressing room in *Bit Players* (Berman, 2000), somewhat run down with shoddy vanity lights around a mirror. James Casteel, my set dresser and prop master, went out and bought some vanity light fixtures and attached them above the mirror already in the room. For the makeup, I used all makeup that I owned and supplemented it with a gypsum lifecast of myself. For the pictures on the wall, I used reference pictures of what Dantalion might look like and movie posters of past thesis films that I had worked on. In the background, the grip department draped a black cloth from two c-stands which Laura put a dress form in front of, along with a portable wardrobe that was in the space when when we tech scouted.

For Will's house, I chose to shoot at my 1st AC and Key Grip's house, which only needed to have furniture moved and dressed with books and wall art. In Will's room, we filled the room with brown furniture and bed linens to go along with Will's color pallet. We filled the bookshelf with theatrical literature, including many of Shakespeare's works. In the kitchen we added a poster of Boris Karloff's *The Mummy* (Freund, 1939), somewhat as an homage to a great film with makeup, but also because Steve, a makeup artist, would be sharing that space with Will.

For the theater, I chose to shoot those scenes in the Nim's Theater in the Performing Arts Center, which needed no set dressing. All that the art department did was paint the floor of the stage matte

black. On the other end of the spectrum, the horror film set required the most work. Renovating the left over set from James Roe's thesis film, *AM 800* (2012), I asked the man who constructed it, Drew Errington, to make changes to it. He responded with nothing but enthusiasm.

The set had been used two other times since James's film and would need a major face lift to be turned into the shoddy cabin I wanted from the *Evil Dead* movies. Drew and I met a month before shooting, telling him the specifications for what I wanted for the set. To cut down the costs, I contacted a friend that worked in a shipping warehouse to ask if we could have some old wooden crates and pallets for us to use as the wooden paneling inside the set. He said we could have as many as we wanted if someone could pick it up. I gave Drew my friend's contact info and he eventually took care of it.

There weren't many props in the script, but something that was a priority was making breakaway plates for the kitchen scene. Originally, the plates were to be smashed over Ben's head, so there was definitely a safety concern. James Casteel and I sat down and researched how to make breakaway plates. The common consensus was to make a mold of a plate and then make duplicates of the mold with plaster of paris. James got to work and called me over to his apartment when he finished his first batch of plates. He and I smashed plates over our heads and just laughed at the absurdity of it all. These plates didn't hurt at all. Eventually, the plate smashing turned into plate throwing, but we still used the plaster plates. With the left-over plates, half of my crew and I smashed them over our heads, but these were thicker plates and hurt slightly. Note to anyone making a slapstick comedy: fake plate thickness matters.

Makeup

As much as I would have liked to have done all the makeup on my film, I knew I wouldn't be able to. To make the head appliance used on Matt, I contacted a makeup artist I knew, Daniel Jouet, at the end of September. I told him that I needed a full foam head piece and wanted a ballpark estimate. He offered to meet in person and we talked shop.

I thought that the head should be in three pieces: a chin, the front of the face, and a cowl that covered the rest of the head. He suggested just a pull over, one-piece mask. I trusted his opinion since I've only made a few prosthetics of this scale before. He gave me an estimate of \$800, which was \$200 less than I expected, and he ordered the materials the next day. When two weeks went by and nothing had been shipped, we contacted the supplier and they said they had not received our order. We promptly found another company out of Atlanta that was moderately cheaper and put in an order with them, but this completely shifted the timetable for the movie.

Normally, prosthetics like this take at least a month to do without rushing once you have the supplies. We were approaching the three-week mark before my original shoot dates in October. Luckily, fellow grad student JA Patton pushed his thesis dates back from early December to the next summer. I gratefully took his original shoot dates in order to not rush Daniel's work and to give me more time to rewrite my script.

Once the supplies arrived, Daniel, Matt, and I scheduled a time to meet for three hours in order to make a lifecast of Matt's head. To do so, Daniel and I applied a bald cap to Matt's head to cover his hair. We then mixed a batch of powdered dental alginate and water and covered Matt's entire head with it.

Before it set and dried, we covered the alginate with four layers of plaster bandages so that it

bonded with the alginate. When everything set, about an hour after we had started, we pulled the plaster apart in two pieces and cut a slit in the back of the alginate so that Matt could release his head from the now solid alginate. This left Daniel and me with a negative mold of Matt's head with the very fine details of his face, just like when a dentist makes a mold of your teeth.

The two parts of plaster were then put back together with the alginate inside. Daniel then mixed and poured a batch of ultracal (a brand of powdered gypsum) into the mold of Matt's face. The ultracal was left to dry a day or two and was then released from the mold, leaving a gypsum bust of Matt.

Daniel and I then talked about how Dantalion should look. I could have easily said I wanted the iconic, red demon with huge horns, like Tim Curry's character from *Legend*, but I wanted the character to be a jinn, a supernatural creature of Islamic lore. I cited pictures of the jinn creatures in the new *Clash of the Titans* heavily. In my mind, Dantalion should have earthy-colored skin, with understated horns along his brow that ended on top with bigger horns that protruded back and away from the head.

Daniel went to work and in two weeks had a finished sculpt of Dantalion on top of Matt's gypsum bust. He had added double lobed ears to the overall design, which I really liked and thought separated the character even more from other demons I had seen. Similar to the life casting process, Daniel covered the sculpt with ultracal. When dried and released, he then had a negative mold with the detail of the sculpted clay. The clay was then stripped from the lifecast and negative mold. The mold was then put back together around the lifecast.

Originally, Daniel tried to make the head appliance first with a thin layer of silicone on the outside, to give it more intrinsic color and a lifelike appearance, and fill the rest with foam latex. After two tries, the silicone would not cure in the horned sections of the mask. Ultimately, the whole piece was made of foam by filling the negative space between the mold and the lifecast with foam liquid latex that cured solid when cooked in an oven.

The process with the failed silicone pulls took over a week, which resulted in not having the

head appliance until the morning of Matt's first day of shooting. I had not seen the final paint job until that moment either. I was a little nervous, but was very pleased once I saw the finished product on Matt's face.

The application of the makeup was done mostly by Brandon “Snakebites” Melancon, but supplemented at times by myself. I knew I wouldn't be able to do it myself, so I had put feelers out to find another makeup artist. I found a handful of makeup artists in New Orleans that were interested, but their samples of work did not meet my standards. Honestly, I felt like I was better than they were. Snakebites had assisted me on at least one third of all the student films I had worked on up until that point. I knew he had an eye for detail, could do the job, and would respect my makeup kit since he had always used mine. I asked him if was available and he said yes. Matter settled.

The actual application of the mask was very easy. Snakebites would first paint Matt's lips and eyes with a creme makeup and then the mask would be pulled over his head, where it would hug his face until removed. Over the course of the shoot, I discovered two problems with the mask. First, the neck of the mask began to split whenever it was pulled over Matt's head. Not a big deal since we had clothing that covered the split. Second, the lip of the mask didn't blend into Matt's face at all.

Daniel's response to the split was that it must have been because Matt's hair had grown, so it was harder to pull over. I've only made one pull-over appliance completely by myself, but I know Daniel missed a step. Before you pour the foam into the mold of the head piece, you're supposed to glue a layer of nylon completely around the neck of the lifecast. By doing so, the nylon transfers into the foam during the curing process, making the mask more flexible in the neck area and minimizing tearing. Daniel either forgot to do this or didn't know to do that. Ultimately not a big deal.

The lips, however are a different story. If the chin of the mask had been a separate piece from the face, I truly believe the lips could have been blended better into Matt's face. It might have taken an extra twenty minutes to apply the full makeup, but the shoot never waited on makeup. For the next

film I may (never) do, I'm using multi-piece appliances.

Last in this section, I want to talk about the psychological aspects of a makeup appliance on the actors and what to be aware of. When Matt first donned the Dantalion mask, everyone on set freaked. Stares from everyone were cast upon Matt. I was guilty of it myself on the first day, too. Just to hear Matt's deepened voice come from inside the mask or to see him smoke a cigarette outside surrounded by mere humans was a spectacle in itself and made me giddy on the inside, but imagine how isolating it is for whoever is in the mask.

I've worn a mask very similar to the Dantalion mask that molded to my face and it can be difficult. Yes, it's much easier to get into character because you can see a physical difference, but it comes with its hindrances also. You can't hear as well, breathing is harder, you're always sweating, head movement is limited, and you can't swallow food easily. Special considerations have to be made for someone inside heavy makeup because of the possible isolation caused by these factors. For my set, I constantly made sure that someone was with Matt when inside the mask and that they treated him as a person, not getting lost in the spectacle that Matt created.

Cinematography

I had originally asked my friend and peer, Erik Reuter, to be my Director of Photography around May of 2011. We had never been able to work together as director and DP, but had similar tastes in movies, so I was pretty excited to work with him. At the time, he was living in Florida, so any communication we had about the project was over phone or email. When I finished the treatment and first draft of the script, I sent it to him and asked him what he thought a few days later. To make a long story short, he had not been able to read either and promised to read them soon. I soon made arrangements to work with Andrew Bryan for the third time in a row as my DP.

Andrew had already been reading each new draft of the script by that point, giving me feedback, but had never seen the films I wanted to reference for the look and shots: *Evil Dead 2* and *Bit Players*. About two months before shooting, we sat down to watch the films together and to talk about what specific shots I wanted to mimic, mostly for the beginning of the movie. Both Andrew and I agreed that whenever Dantalion appeared in a scene, we would use wide lenses, overtly smooth camera moves (jibs and dollies), and unrealistic lighting: the red light and smoke behind Dantlion, highly contrasted shadows inside Will's house, and the lightning gags. We also reserved the use of canted angles until the climax of the movie to contrast with the other scenes. This was all to make the scenes with Dantalion more formalistic.

On the other side of the spectrum, every scene with just Will was aimed to to be on the side of realism. We would use lighting setups that created minimal shadows and primarily normal and telephoto lenses on tripods or, for camera moves, use a steadicam and cut to spider brace to mimic the motion of a real person.

Early on, I decided I wanted to shoot on the Canon 5D Mark II because it was available to me

through school and also because it could shoot 1080p at 23.976 frames per second. I didn't want to shoot any slow motion, so I didn't need to use a camera that shot variable frame rates. However, we did have a Canon 7D and Canon 60D on set at all times when we planned to shoot two cameras at a time. When we did, we never cross shot due to lighting setups. We always shot the medium and close up shots from the same angle with the 7D and 60D side by side instead of the 5D. We did this to stay consistent with our lens lengths and because their crop factors were the same, 1.6x. This meant that whatever 35mm lens we attached to these cameras, the lens length needed to be multiplied by 1.6 to determine the relative lens length as compared to the same lens attached to the 5D. On the second day, we found pulling focus on the 5D during a dynamic moving shot was very difficult and decided to only use the 7D on dolly moves, which was relatively easier to pull focus on due to its cropped sensor.

Editing

Ingesting, the process of putting all of the media into a computer system, began in late January of 2012. I had dumped all the files from the shoot myself and created the naming system, so I knew everything was labeled the way I wanted it. Rob Racine, a professor in the FTCA department and my boss, had mentioned to me that he had been working on a way to transcode footage from the H.264 codec that the Canon cameras use to the Avid native codec DNxHD115 and DNxHD36 by using the FTCA's Flip Factory server. Flip Factory is a program that can be customized to watch certain folders for incoming video files and transcode these files to another format with a different codec. This is helpful since the program is on a much more powerful computer, i.e faster, than any of the computers in the editing lab or suites in the Performing Arts Center. What would take a full two or three days to transcode could be done in less than one.

What I should have done was test my workflow. Instead, I dumped all my footage onto the Flip Factory server. A day later, I copied all the new footage onto a hard drive and began to import the new footage into an Avid project. I was met with an error message saying that the imported footage didn't match the frame rate of the project, 23.976/sec, and that the footage had an alpha channel. I was bewildered to say the least. I went into the settings for my watch folder to discover that my original footage was converted to 23.98/sec and that the color codec that was used was “millions of colors +.” You can't simply round up to 23.98 and expect Avid to take your footage. You could convert the 23.98 footage to 23.976, but that takes just as long as transcoding the original footage through Avid, so you might as well transcode the footage that way from the start. Also, from talking with Mark Raymond, a fellow graduate student, I found out there are two main color options when using Flip Factory, “million of colors” and “millions of colors +.” What “millions of colors +” does is create an alpha

channel based on the luminance of the picture. This might be helpful if I was doing compositing work, but I wasn't.

From that point, I decided to go with a workflow that I knew worked in theory, but had never done myself. For *Orange Appeal*, I had transcoded the original H.264 footage to 35:1 standard definition and relinked back to the original footage via AMA, but relinking was an unstable process through AMA. That, compounded with the nightmare KD Amond, another fellow grad student, had recently gone through doing the same relinking technique, steered me away from relinking via AMA. Instead, I transcoded the original footage to DNxHD 115, which is almost visually identical to the original footage, but three times the file size. This new footage became my master, what I would relink to later for the final export. From there, I transcoded the DNxHD115 footage to DNxHD 36, which is one third the size of DNxHD 115 and easier on computer processors, to edit offline.

This transcoding fiasco along with syncing clips brought me into late February. I then watched each shot from each scene, color coding each clip and marking the start of each series, a process that I had picked up from Andrew Bryan when editing *The Princess Wife* (Hansen, 2011) with him in July 2010. Once finished, I made a very rough cut in two weeks, followed by a second cut four days after that with temp music.

What came very easily were the dialogue scenes involving Mason. Much of those scenes remain the same way as in the second cut. What was difficult was cutting from a moving shot into another moving shot. "Cut on action!" I know, but where in the action do I cut? All that's happening is the camera moves forward in one dolly, which then cuts to a dolly shot facing the other direction. Eventually, my rule of thumb was to cut two thirds into the move in the first clip to the other dolly after it had finished one third of its move.

When it came time to export the second cut so that I had a small enough file to upload to the internet, I revisited my rival, Flip Factory. I made a new watch folder that would convert a quicktime

movie file using a lower bit rate and H.264 compression so that the file was under 500MB, the file size cap on Vimeo. Once I copied my same-as-source export to Flip Factory, I had my smaller file an hour later. I uploaded it to Vimeo and blasted the video to my friends on Facebook looking for their feedback.

With the third cut, all I did was smooth out the edits, add important sound effects to the beginning scenes, and change the temp music to something more appropriate. By this point, I was beginning to lose objectivity on the cut. Jokes weren't funny anymore as I focused more and more on small details. I tried showing it to the various undergrad film classes, but at that point, everyone had already seen a cut or had given feedback to the effect of, "I liked it." Hamp Overton, my committee chair, commented that the cut still had a lot of air to be cut out and that I should sit down with another professor, Danny Retz. Two steps ahead of you, Hamp.

I had already scheduled to meet with Danny the next week. Before that point, I finished another cut where I overlapped each shot to the point that I cut out almost all of Dantalion's reactions, which cut most of his personality. That was the bad news, but putting air back into a cut was relatively simple. The good news was I changed the shot order in the beginning horror film scene so that it flowed more smoothly and I cut the bathroom scene. The bathroom scene was originally intended to be a funny moment to lengthen the last half of the movie since the first half was almost twelve minutes of the (at the time) eighteen minute cut. The reason for cutting the scene was that it didn't make sense. If Will was running late, why is he taking time out to shave? He should be in his car by that point. It had been a question I had since the second cut and others had pointed it out, so it met the cutting room floor.

I met with Danny once more before I had picture lock. By this point it just needed a polish, extending a clip here and there by a couple of frames. I then met with Andrew Bryan again in the finishing suite to relink and color correct the movie. Would it relink without a problem?! It did. How

anti-climatic?

What's nice about the Avid Symphony system in the finishing suite is that instead of having to put a color effect on every clip that needed color correction, Symphony allows you to affect every clip taken from the same master clip. In the time it took Andrew to color correct *Orange Appeal*, which was about eight minutes in total length, we corrected *Dantalion*, which ran eighteen minutes. For the entire movie, we applied a film-like S curve to the gamma in order to increase the contrast of the picture. Also, for the beginning horror scene, we desaturated the color and applied a widescreen mask in order to make it stand out from the rest of the film. The only other heavily color corrected shot was the ending shot with the ghost of Hamlet's father. We added a heavy blue tint to the picture to contrast the red light that follows Dantalion's arrivals.

Sound

My production sound was mixed primarily by Eric Gremillion with help from Lee Garcia. This was the first movie I had shot using lavalier mics, since I have always been wary of using them. If the sound from your boom mic is good, you don't need lavs. With that said, most of my lavalier sound was good, so most of the dialogue in the movie came from those mics.

Once I finished the picture cut, I went immediately to sound editing. I knew I had an entire scene that had a constant hum from a transformer, so I left that for last, setting the levels for all the sound tracks first and then moving onto music. I had just finished polishing Nicholas Isom's thesis film, *Lost in the Fire* (2012), and the deal I made with him was that he had to help compose the score for *Dantalion* and record it with me. For all the scenes with Dantalion, I wanted a “doom” metal sound reminiscent of the bands SunnO))) and Earth, which use a combination of drums, electric guitars, and organs. Every other song for the movie was intended to use synthesizers reminiscent of John Carpenter films.

Nick and I wrote and recorded the pieces with guitar and organ together in a matter of hours. For the synth parts, I let him come up with a couple of ideas and told him where in the movie they would occur. I walked away, asking that he give me a couple of options to use for the cut. I received the songs a few days later and was very happy with the results.

I moved onto my last sound hurdle, the hum. To remove the hum, I had assumed that I could use the Izotope plug-in inside of Avid in order to filter it out. *Assuming makes an ass out of you and me*. The Izotope plug-in is only a shadow of the stand alone program of the same name and is intended to be used in conjunction with Nuendo.

The week that I had planned to spend on post-sound was a joke. I've come to the conclusion

that no matter the length of the film, it will need some amount of post-sound work. To say, “Don't shoot in a noisy location,” or “Wind screens will keep out all the wind noise in your mic,” is foolish and naive. Sometimes, a location's look or availability trumps the ambient noise of the location. Sometimes you have crickets all over your production sound. All you can do is try to minimize the amount of noise caused by a location and then deal with it in post.

Post-sound, along with lighting, is where my knowledge falls short. With lighting, I compensated by having crew members that solely focus on lighting. I had no plan for post-sound, but have since mixed the final cut in Nuendo.

Chapter 3

Self Analysis

What I'm most proud of with this movie is that the story I ended up with in the final edit, minus one scene that was superfluous, is the same story that I wrote. Many movies start with a script, are shot, and due to technical difficulties, bad planning, and/or bad performances are cut into a different story. Not *Dantalion*! Also, it was very important that the audience of my film be able to decipher my through-line. Yes, movies are meant to entertain, but I determined that the difference between low art and high art, a skit and a well thought-out comedy is that the latter has a point to it. It says something. With every screening of *Dantalion*, from the rough cuts all the way to picture lock, I would ask the viewers what the point of the movie was and was always met with an answer close to my through-line. That's how I know that my movie was a success. It conveyed my message, while entertaining. From my second cut and on, the audience always laughed where I had intended. A picture locked cut of *Dantalion* also screened at the 6th Annual UNO Film Fest, where it was nominated for six awards.

Something that I had begun to be self-conscious about at the beginning of the shoot was whether my films were successful due to my writing and directing or by the people that I continually work over and over with: Andrew Bryan and Ben Matheny in particular. Have they been carrying me and my films over the past two years? After filming *Dantalion*, I've come to the conclusion that I can't do it all, no matter how much I try or want to. That's the DIY mentality of independent filmmakers, but why shouldn't I use people that are more knowledgeable in areas that I'm deficient in to make something greater than I could by myself? They're not carrying the movie, just enhancing it. Despite how much I roll my eyes every time I hear Hamp Overton say it, filmmaking is an organic process where everyone involved contributes.

Lastly, I can concede that I made mistakes while making *Dantalion*. I made assumptions about

certain steps in the filmmaking process that led to inefficient time use and ultimately caused the film to finish later than I expected. Time wasted eventually equals money wasted, especially on paying film sets. That's my biggest regret of the film, but it luckily only affects me and not my cast and crew. I also learned that I don't have to do everything myself. Going back to the DIY mentality of independent filmmaking, it assumes that the more jobs you can do by yourself, the less money that will be spent during production. That doesn't always hold true, nor does it lend itself to making a better product. Smaller crews can take longer to get the same amount of work done and without an effective division of labor, specialization cannot occur which can lead to a product that's mediocre or lacking in certain areas. By having a larger crew and learning to let other capable people take responsibility for the different aspects of filmmaking, I could focus more on directing and was less stressed. This, I believe, made for a better movie in every respect.

Chapter 4

Filmography

Anderson. 2004. *AVP: Alien vs. Predator*
Berman. 2000. *Bit Players*
Cassavetes. 2004. *The Notebook*
Costner. 1990. *Dances With Wolves*
Demme. 2004. *The Manchurian Candidate*
Fincher. 1999. *Fight Club*
Freund. 1939. *The Mummy*
Hansen. 2011. *The Princess Wife*
Isom. 2012. *Lost in the Fire*
Landis. 1988. *Coming to America*
LeBlanc. 2011. *Orange Appeal*
LeBlanc. 2012. *Dantalion*
Marquand. 1983. *Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi*
Matheny. 2011. *Nessun Dorma*
McTiernan. 1987. *Predator*
Raimi. 1987. *Evil Dead 2*
Raimi. 1992. *Army of Darkness*
Reiner. 1984. *This is Spinal Tap*
Reitman. 1984. *Ghostbusters*
Roe. 2012. *AM 800*
Snyder. 2004. *Dawn of the Dead*

Chapter 5

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Shakespeare, William, André Gide, and Jacques Schiffrin. *Hamlet*. New York: Pantheon, 1945. Print.

Appendices

Appendix A: Shooting Script

Dantalion

By

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1 INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ASH, a rugged 30 year old man, is covered in cuts and his clothes are tattered as he aims a shotgun around the room. Behind him is LINDA, Ash's 26 year old girlfriend, grasping his chest and peering around the room.

A GRANDFATHER CLOCK strikes 12 times. Ash and Linda turn to the clock.

The lights of the room begin to flicker on and off sporadically.

Demonic LAUGHTER can be heard throughout the cabin.

The furniture begins to shake and LAUGH along.

Ash and Linda hold each other tighter and look around the room in panic.

2 I/E. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

We see through the POV of DANTALION, one of the great demons of Hell, looking through a window and into the cabin. We hear his LAUGHTER and HEAVY BREATHING.

He leaps through the window. Linda turns just in time to watch a red flash pounce on ASH.

LINDA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!

Dantalion, a djinn with receding goat horns, facial crags, and draped in middle eastern clothing, feeds on Ash's entrails as he wails in pain. He looks up at Linda.

DANTALION
Boo. Hahahahaha!

A boom microphone falls into frame.

HENRY(OS)
CUT! Boom op! Where's the boom
op? You're fired!

We back up from the cabin to reveal that it is actually a movie set, covered in lights and populated with workers.

HENRY, a straight to dvd movie director in his mid-thirties, gets out of his chair, megaphone in hand, and walks up to Ash and Linda.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Ugh. We'll pick back up here after
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

lunch.

Ash wakes up from death and tries to wipe fake blood off of his hands.

Ash, Linda, and Henry begin to walk off set. Dantalion jumps in front of Henry.

DANTALION

Henry, how was that?

Henry snaps his fingers and makes a confused look on his face.

DANTALION

Will. It's Will.

HENRY

Will, right. I have to say, I wasn't really feeling it.

DANTALION

What weren't...

HENRY

I think it was the breathing. Maybe you could breathe like this...

Henry takes in and lets out two heavy breaths.

HENRY

...instead of this.

Henry takes in and lets out two heavy breaths exactly the same way as before.

Dantalion rolls his eyes.

DANTALION

Ok.

Dantalion begins to walk away before Henry grabs his arm and spins him back around.

HENRY

Oh yeah. When you say "boo," can you be faster with it? More intense?

DANTALION

Like how?

HENRY

You know, you're Dantalion, the
67th arch-duke of Hell. "Boo!"

Henry puts his hands in front of him as if he were about to
scare someone.

HENRY

You know. Like that. You try.

DANTALION

Boo!

Henry takes a moment.

HENRY

That was good. Not what I was
looking for...less retarded.

DANTALION

Boo!

Henry remains stoic, then pats Dantalion on the shoulder.

HENRY

I'll know it when I see it. Good
talk, Will.

Dantalion watches Henry walk away, balls his fists, and lets
out a roar of frustration.

3 INT. MAKEUP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

WILL, a 27 year old character actor, sits in the make up
chair, covered in rubber prosthetics in the visage of
Dantalion.

Steve, Will's somewhat older roommate/make up artist, pours
makeup remover into a dram cup and begins to remove the the
prosthetics from Will's face.

WILL

He still doesn't know my name! I'm
fucking tired of this!

Will mimics a frightening pose at the mirror.

WILL

Boo!... Give me direction! Give
me an as if, don't give me a line
reading!

STEVE

Mmhmm.

WILL

In theater, directors trust their
actors to bring a level of
artistry...

Steve continues to remove Will's makeup, but struggles with
Will's movement.

STEVE

Stop moving.

WILL

They're given the freedom to
develop their character...

STEVE

Will, sit still.

WILL

Given a certain level of respect.

Steve puts his brush and makeup remover down.

STEVE

They also do their own makeup! So
you take this and finish taking it
off.

Steve begins to grab his things and walk away.

WILL

How am I supposed to get home? You
drove us.

STEVE

Take the bus.

4 EXT. BUS STOP - DAWN

Will, now makeup free, walks to the bus stop. There are
fliers and little scraps of trash littered around.

Will begins to pick up the scraps.

One last flier remains. As Will bends to pick it up, it
moves right out of arms length.

Will extends his reach, but the flier moves again.

Will looks around and sees no one.

Will pounces for the flier and the flier moves towards Will,
causing Will to overshoot.

Will stomps on the flier beneath him, reaches under his

shoe, and reads the flier.

It is for an open casting call for *Hamlet*.

5 EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The wind blows the trees in front of the house. Lightning and thunder crash.

6 INT. WILL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Will walks up to his bookshelf, fingers the spines of his books, settles on his battered copy of *Hamlet*, and removes it from the shelf.

Will turns to his mirror and opens up to the third act of *Hamlet*.

WILL

To be, or not to be: that is the
question: Whether 'tis nobler in
the mind to suffer the slings and
arrows of outrageous fortune or...

Will looks into his book for the rest of the line.

Dantalion appears in the mirror.

DANTALION

To take arms against a sea of
troubles and by opposing end
them?—To die,—to sleep,— No more.

Will looks up to the mirror.

DANTALION

Boo!

Dantalion's hands stretch out from the mirror and choke Will.

Will grabs at the hand's and backs away from the mirror. He struggles to breath until he sees that it is his hands that are choking him.

Will relinquishes his grip and stumbles out of his room and into the kitchen.

7 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DANTALION(OS)

...And by a sleep to say we end the
heartache.

Will reaches for the nearest light switch and flicks it up.

The ceiling light turns on, but the bulb filament burns out just as fast.

DANTALION(OS)
 ...and the thousand natural shocks
 that flesh is heir to, -'tis a
 consummation devoutly to be wish'd.

Will stumbles to the refrigerator and opens the door to illuminate the room. We see Dantalion's outline.

WILL
 Who are you?

DANTALION
 The 67th arch-duke of Hell.

Dantalion walks into the light.

DANTALION
 It's me, baby.

WILL
 What do you want?

DANTALION
 I'm hurt, Will. You're trying to
 get rid of me, but we need each
 other.

WILL
 What? You need me. Why do I need
 you?

DANTALION
 You're right. Without you, people
 don't see my beautiful face, but
 you and I both know I'm your meal
 ticket.

WILL
 I'm going to make it through
 auditions. You'll see.

DANTALION
 Kid, theater doesn't pay. How are
 you going to pay for new plates?

WILL (CONT'D)
 New plates? Why would I buy new
 pl...

A porcelain plate whizzes past Will's head and shatters on the wall behind him.

Plates now smash all around Will as he dodges left and jukes right.

Steve enters the kitchen from his bedroom and turns on the overhead light that was burnt out.

He wipes the sleep from his eyes to see Will throwing plates at the ground.

STEVE

Hey man, I'm sleeping.

Will realizes what he is doing and freezes. Dantalion is nowhere to be found.

STEVE

What? The fuck?

WILL

Ummm. Fight scene tomorrow...you know...method acting.

Will mimics throwing a plate and smiles.

STEVE

Riiiiight. Well, try keeping the method to yourself. Night.

Steve heads back to his room, but pops his head back into the kitchen before totally exiting.

STEVE

And clean this shit up.

Steve exits and closes the door behind him.

STEVE(OS)

Actors.

Will looks around him, rubs his head, and lets out a sigh.

8 INT. MAKEUP ROOM - DAY

Will is sitting in the makeup chair. His head is covered in prosthetics with the exception on his face.

Next to Will is Steve, holding a brush and a makeup pallet. He begins to apply dark makeup around Will's eyes.

STEVE

So, are you going to tell me what the other night about?

WILL

I told you. Fight scene.

Steve stares at Will, unconvinced.

WILL
I'm auditioning for Hamlet
tomorrow.

Will takes the audition flier out from his costume and hands it to Steve.

Steve reads the flier and then throws it to the ground.

STEVE
You can't just skip work to go to
an audition. They'll fire you.

Steve grabs his makeup and goes back to applying it to Will's face.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT walks into the room to announce...

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Hey guys, call time is pushed back
til noon tomorrow.

STEVE
Thanks.

The production assistant exits.

WILL
I can do both! Auditions start at
ten. That's plenty of time to get
back to set.

Steve looks at the door and then back at Will.

STEVE
Ok. Even though this seems rather
convenient now, what if you get the
part? There's no way you can
rehearse with them for a month and
work on this shoot. You're going
to have to choose...

Steve picks up the Dantalion prosthetic in one hand, then gesticulates with the other.

STEVE (CONT)
theater...

Steve puts the prosthetic out in front of him.

STEVE (CONT)
or film.

WILL
I'll deal with that when I get
there.

9 EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is eerily still.

10 INT. WILL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Will tosses back and forth in his bed as he struggles to sleep.

His movement stops and he stares up at the ceiling.

11 EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - TIME LAPSE

The sky around Will's house goes from night to day.

12 INT. WILL'S ROOM - MORNING

Will is asleep in his bed. He sniffs the air.

WILL
Steve must have made waffles.

He turns over and his hand flops onto a waffle iron on his nightstand, and opens his eyes in pain.

WILL
Awwwww!

Will looks to his night stand and finds a waffle iron in place of his alarm clock.

Dantalion comes into the room, wearing an apron and carrying two plates, and two forks.

DANTALION
Good morning, sunshine. I made you
breakfast. Waffle?

Dantalion serves himself a waffle.

WILL
No. What time is it?

DANTALION
Eleven thirty. I had to unplug
your clock for the waffle maker.
Hope that wasn't a problem.

WILL
I'm late!

Will jumps out of bed and frantically gathers clothes he finds on the floor.

DANTALION
You don't have somewhere to be do
you?

Dantalion smiles, waiting for Will's reaction.

Will looks at Dantalion, then storms for the door.

WILL
He's not real.

Will passes Dantalion.

Dantalion trips Will and he hits the floor with a loud thud.

DANTALION
How's that for real?

Will wipes at his nose to find blood on his fingers.

Will picks himself and runs out of the room.

13 INT. MAKEUP ROOM - DAY

Steve walks into the makeup room with a set bag and makeup kit in each hand and sets them down.

He looks at his watch.

It's 12:05.

14 INT. WILL'S BATHROOM - DAY

Will, now with tissue stuck in his nose, is in the middle of shaving as he rehearses his lines.

WILL
To be or not to be, that is the
question. Whether tis nobler...

A NOISE from behind the shower curtain shocks him and causes him to cut himself.

Will pulls the shower curtain back to reveal Dantalion and HELL'S MARCHING BAND.

The band plays NOISE and Dantalion begins to orchestrate.

Will goes back to shaving.

WILL
Whether tis nobler in the mind to
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

suffer the slings and arrows...

Dantalion walks towards Will, pulls out an air horn, and blows it into the air.

Will cuts himself again.

15 INT. MAKEUP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Steve's makeup kits are all unpacked.

He crosses his arms and looks at his watch.

It's 12:30.

Steve pulls his cellphone from his pocket and calls Will.

16 EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Will's car passes by.

We hear his cellphone RING.

17 INT. WILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Will grips his steering wheel tightly.

Multiple cuts are on his face with toilet paper covering them.

Will finds the phone and brings it to his ear.

WILL

Hello.

STEVE(VO)

It's twelve thirty. Where the hell are you?

Dantalion is in the passenger seat, changing the radio station, settling on a metal song.

DANTALION

This is more like it.

Will tries to turn the radio off.

He and Dantalion go back and forth with control over the radio.

WILL

I overslept. I'm going to this audition and then coming to set.

DANTALION
No you're not.

STEVE (VO)
Screw that. Get down here now.
Henry is flipping out.

18 INT. FILM SET - CONTINUOUS

Henry looks at his watch as he's surrounded by other film production members.

HENRY
Where the fuck is my Dantalion?!
Huh?! Hello!

A production assistant walks up to Henry with a cup of coffee.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Here's your coffee, Mr. Griffin.

Henry looks the production assistant up and down before slapping the coffee out of their hand.

They both stare at the spilled coffee.

HENRY
You should probably clean that up.

19 INT. WILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

WILL
Tell him something. My car broke
down or something. Just stall him!

Will hangs up the phone.

DANTALION (OS)
Wanna play a game?

Will looks in the rear view mirror to find Dantalion in the back seat, waving back.

DANTALION
Back here.

WILL
No.

DANTALION
Too bad.

Dantalion reaches forward to cover Will's eyes with his hands.

20 EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Will's car swerves from lane to lane.

21 INT. WILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Will swats Dantalion's hands aside.

DANTALION (OS)
You missed our turn.

Will looks around for Dantalion to find him in the front passenger seat again.

WILL
I'm going to this audition, then to set.

DANTALION
Will, we can do this the easy way or the hard way.

Will looks Dantalion in the eye.

Dantalion shakes his head from left to right.

DANTALION (CONT'D)
You're buckled right?

22 EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

A car is sitting at a red light.

The repetition of a CAR HORN can be heard getting closer.

Will's car stops and goes as it pulls up to the stop line.

The DRIVER in the other car looks up to see Will's head smashing into the steering wheel repeatedly, causing the HORN to beep. Dantalion is nowhere to be seen.

23 INT. WILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

We see Dantalion's hand smashing Will's head into the steering wheel.

24 INT. FILM SET - CONTINUOUS

Henry is surrounded by his crew as he looks at his watch.

Henry shoves the megaphone into the production assistant.

HENRY
Get to makeup. You're Dantalion now.

Steve runs onto set and up to Henry.

STEVE

Wait! It won't work. The mask is made to fit Will only, but I know where he is. I'll can go get him!

Henry sighs.

HENRY

Get him. If he's not here, in makeup, within the hour, he's gone.

Steve nods and runs off set.

25 INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Will, who now has a bruise on the side of his face, walks through a door into the backstage wing of the theater.

Dantalion walks into his path.

WILL

Come on!

DANTALION

Don't worry. You've made you're decision. I just want to wish you luck.

Dantalion offers Will his hand.

Will reluctantly shakes hands with Dantalion.

WILL

Thanks.

Dantalion draws closer to Will.

DANTALION

Break a leg.

Dantalion kicks the side of Will's leg.

There is a loud CRACK.

Will lets out a painful wail.

DANNY(OS)

Next!

Steve runs into the backstage area. Dantalion is gone.

STEVE

Will! You gotta come back with
(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

me...

Will turns around to face Steve.

STEVE

Whoa! What the hell happened to you?

WILL

Dantalion. He's been haunting me.

Steve shakes his head in disbelief.

STEVE

Ok, whatever. Henry is going to fire you if you don't come to set with me now.

Will looks back to the stage, then begins to walk out with Steve.

DANNY(OS)

NEEEXT!

Will stops.

WILL

I've gotta do this.

Will straightens up, turns around, and limps into the theater.

26 INT. COMMUNITY THEATER AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Will limps to center stage.

The stage is empty minus two raised platforms.

In the audience is DANNY, Hamlet's director.

WILL

My name is Will Addison and I'm auditioning for the role of Hamlet.

Will takes a beat and begins his monologue.

WILL (CONT'D)

To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them?

Dantalion steps out from one of the stage wings and creeps

towards Will.

DANTALION

-To die,-to sleep,- No more;

Will sees Dantalion and begins to limp away.

WILL

And by a sleep to say we end the
heartache, and the thousand natural
shocks that flesh is heir to,-'tis
a consummation devoutly to be
wish'd.

Will trips on the back of his pants and falls onto his back.

Dantalion walks towards Will as he crawls away.

DANTALION

To die,-to sleep;-
To sleep: perchance to dream:-ay,
there's the rub; For in that sleep
of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this
mortal coil, must give us pause:

Will struggles back up. Dantalion grasps Will's throat.

DANTALION

There's the respect that makes
calamity of so long life;

Will struggles in Dantalion's grasp. The two match glares.

Will winks at Dantalion as he raises his knee to Dantalion's groin.

Dantalion's grasp releases Will as he doubles over himself.

WILL

For who would bear the whips and
scorns of time, the oppressor's
wrong, the proud man's contumely,
the pangs of despis'd love, the
law's delay, the insolence of
office, and the spurns that patient
merit of the unworthy takes, when
he himself might his quietus make
with...

DANNY

That's enough.

Dantalion and Will look at the director.

Will's body sags and Dantalion disappears.

WILL

Thank you.

Will limps off the stage and to the exit at the end of the auditorium.

Before Will can leave, the director opens his mouth.

DANNY

It's Will right?

Will turns around and stops.

WILL

Yes.

DANNY

Will, I want to be candid with you. That was...interesting...It takes a lot of guts for a guy in your condition, falling all over the stage and all, to read for me, but you don't fit what I'm looking for for Hamlet.

Will sighs.

DANNY

But you've got the chops and that's what's important. I want you for Hamlet's father's ghost. You'd be in heavy makeup, though. Would you be interested?

Will brushes his face at his bruise and then looks at his leg.

WILL

Yeah. I think that would be for the best.

DANNY

Hey kid. Don't think this isn't going to be a piece of cake. I don't baby my actors. I'll give you minimum direction and expect you to give me art. You're sure you're up for that?

Will smiles.

WILL
Yes sir. I can do that.

FADE TO BLACK.

Appendix B: Breakdown Sheets

Scene #: 1
Script Page: 1-3
Page Count: 2 4/8

Breakdown Sheet

Sheet #: 1
Int/Ext: INT/EXT
Day/Night: Night

Scene Description: Introduced to Dantalion through fake movie/set

Settings: Film Set/ Cabin

Location: PAC Sound Stage

Sequence: Script Day: 1

Cast Members Ash Dantalion Henry Linda	Background Actors 5 Film workers PA (Dawn)	Props boom mic megaphone set lights Shotgun
	Wardrobe Ash's tattered clothes Dantalion's Middle Eastern Henry's clothes #1 Linda's clothes	Makeup/Hair Ash's cuts and bruises Ash's entrails Dantalion Fake blood Linda's sweat
Set Dressing Directo'rs chair extra stuff (ask David) grandfather clock shaking furniture		

Scene #: 8

Sheet #: 10

Script Page: 12, 13

Breakdown Sheet

Int/Ext: INT

Page Count: 6/8

Day/Night: Day

Scene Description: Henry hires a new Dantalion

Settings: Film Set/ Cabin

Location: PAC Sound Stage

Sequence:

Script Day: 6

Cast Members Henry	Background Actors 5 Film workers PA (Dawn)	Props cup full of coffee Henry's watch megaphone spilled coffee
	Wardrobe Henry's clothes #2 PA's wardrobe #2	

Scene #: 2
Script Page: 3-6
Page Count: 2 2/8

Breakdown Sheet

Sheet #: 2
Int/Ext: INT
Day/Night: Night

Scene Description: Steve and Will discuss Will's theater dreams

Settings: Makeup Room

Location: PAC Dressing Room (Tentative)

Sequence: Script Day: 1

Cast Members Steve Will		Props assorted makeup stuff dram cup makeup brush makeup remover
	Wardrobe Steve's clothes #1 Will's Dantalion clothes	Makeup/Hair Dantalion prosthetics (Will)
Set Dressing makeup chair mirror		

Scene #: 5

Sheet #: 5

Script Page: 9-11,

Breakdown Sheet

Int/Ext: INT

Page Count: 1 3/8

Day/Night: Day

Scene Description: Will admits to Steve that he's being haunted by Dantalion

Settings: Makeup Room

Location: PAC Dressing Room (Tentative)

Sequence:

Script Day: 2

Cast Members Steve Will	Background Actors PA (Dawn)	Props Dantalion rubber mask makeup brush makeup pallette
	Wardrobe Steve's clothes #3 Will's Dantalion clothes	Makeup/Hair Dark makeup around Will's Will's Dantalion
Set Dressing door makeup chair		

Scene #: 9

Sheet #: 11

Script Page: 13-14

Breakdown Sheet

Int/Ext: INT

Page Count: 7/8

Day/Night: Day

Scene Description: Dantalion break's Will's leg on the way to auditions

Settings: Community Theater Lobby

Location: PAC Theater (Tentative)

Sequence:

Script Day: 6

Cast Members Dantalion Producer Will		
	Wardrobe Dantalion's Middle Eastern Will's clothes #5	Makeup/Hair Will's bruise

Scene #: 10
 Script Page: 14-16
 Page Count: 2 5/8

Breakdown Sheet

Sheet #: 12
 Int/Ext: INT
 Day/Night: Day

Scene Description: Will auditions for Hamlet while battling Dantalion on stage

Settings: Community Theater Auditorium

Location: PAC Theater (Tentative)

Sequence: Script Day: 6

Cast Members Dantalion Director Producer Will		
	Wardrobe Dantalion's Middle Eastern Will's clothes #5	Makeup/Hair Will's bruise

Scene #: 3
Script Page: 6
Page Count: 6/8

Breakdown Sheet

Sheet #: 3
Int/Ext: INT
Day/Night: Night

Scene Description: Will encounters Dantalion for the first time when he tries to read Hamlet

Settings: Will's Bedroom

Location: Sean McKinney's house

Sequence:

Script Day: 1

Cast Members Dantalion Will		Props Hamlet book
Set Dressing bookshelf Will's mirror		

Scene #: 7

Sheet #: 9

Script Page: 11,12,13

Breakdown Sheet

Int/Ext: INT

Page Count: 1 5/8

Day/Night: Day

Scene Description: Will wakes up to Dantalion's pancakes and is late for work and auditions

Settings: Will's Bedroom

Location: Sean McKinney's house (Tentative)

Sequence:

Script Day: 6

Cast Members Dantalion Will		Props 2 forks 2 knives 2 plates spatula Waffle iron Will's phone
	Wardrobe Dantalion's apron Dantalion's Middle Eastern Will's clothes #5 Will's PJs	
Set Dressing bed bookshelf nightstand waffle supplies waffles! will's clothes on floor Will's mirror		

Scene #: 6 A

Sheet #: 6

Script Page: 10

Int/Ext: INT

Page Count: 1/8

Day/Night: Day

Breakdown Sheet

Scene Description: Dantalion interrupts Will with a Marching Band

Settings: Will's Bedroom

Location: Sean McKinney's house

Sequence:

Script Day: 3

Cast Members Dantalion Will	Background Actors Marching Band from Hell	
	Wardrobe Dantalion's Middle Eastern Will's clothes #2	Makeup/Hair Marching Band from Hell

Scene #: 6 C

Sheet #: 8

Script Page: 10

Int/Ext: INT

Page Count: 1/8

Day/Night: Day

Breakdown Sheet

Scene Description: Dantalion posses Will's hand while Will is on the toilet

Settings: Will's Bathroom

Location: Sean McKinney's house (Tentative)

Sequence:

Script Day: 5

Cast Members Dantalion Will		Props book pages Hamlet book
	Wardrobe Will's clothes #4	Makeup/Hair Dantalion's hand
Set Dressing toilet		

Scene #: 6 B

Sheet #: 7

Script Page: 10

Int/Ext: INT

Page Count: 1/8

Day/Night: Day

Breakdown Sheet

Scene Description: Will's paper flies into his face

Settings: Will's Bedroom

Location: Sean McKinney's house

Sequence:

Script Day: 4

Cast Members Will		Props Hamlet script loose script paper
Special Effects fan	Wardrobe Will's clothes #3	

Scene #: 4
 Script Page: 7-9
 Page Count: 2 3/8

Breakdown Sheet

Sheet #: 4
 Int/Ext: INT
 Day/Night: Night

Scene Description: Dantalion breaks plates over Will's head

Settings: Will's Kitchen

Location: Sean McKinney's house

Sequence:

Script Day: 1

Cast Members Dantalion Will		Props 1 half shattered plate 20 china plates
Special Effects fridge light	Wardrobe Steve clothes #2 (PJs) Will's clothes #1	Makeup/Hair Steve sleepy eyes
Set Dressing burnt bulb ceiling light light switch refridgerator		

Appendix C: Shot List

Scene	Shot	Time	Cast	Sp-Eq
Scene 1	2 shot jib (start on gun)			jib
	Dolly in on clock			dolly
	Dolly in on Ash and Linda			dolly
	Inserts of shaking things x3			
Scene 1	POV from window->dolly through window			dolly
Scene 1	CU Ash			
	CU Linda			
	CU Linda w/ blood			
	MS Dantalion			
Scene 2	Steadicam out to WS-->2Shot			steadi
	MS Henry			
	CU Henry			
	MS Dantalion			
Scene 3	CU Dantalion			
	2 shot			
	WS (establishing)			
	MS Steve			
	CU Steve			
	M OTS of Will			
	CU Will (straight on)			
	Insert of Makeup			
Scene 4	WS (establishing)			
	Steady track on Will			steadi
	Steady track on flier & fliers on wall minus Hamlet			steadi
	OTS of flier			
Scene 5	Ext of house at night...lightning			
Scene 6	insert of bookshelf			
	OTS MS of Will's reflection-->Dantalion's reflection			
	Will->CU (straight on) wide angle			
	insert of book			
	MS/Profile of Will->CU getting choked			
	WS/Master			
Scene 7	WS (Will entering-->fridge)			
	Insert of light switch			
	Insert of light bulb			
	MS-dolly in CU of Will @ fridge			dolly
	MCU of Dantalion @sink			
	MS->CU dolly of Dantalion			
	LS Dantalion pan-->MS @ sink			
	MCU of Will (Dan @ sink)			
	Insert of plates smashed			
	MS of Steve			
	WMS of Will smashing plates (after Steve arrives)			
Scene 8	2shot/WS			
	MS Steve			
	CU Steve			
	MS Will			

	CU Will	
	2shot in mirror	
Scene 9	Ext of house at night	
Scene 10	Overhead of Will in bed @ night	jib
	CU Will, not sleeping	
Scene 11	Ext of house, day	
Scene 12	Overhead MCU of Will in bed	jib
	Insert of waffle iron	
	WS->MS of Dantalion	
	Master	
	MS of Will @ doorway/Dan in bg (rack)	
	Steady in front of Will-->fall	steady
	CU of Will on ground->rack to Dantalion	
Scene 13	WMS Steve setting up	
	Insert of watch	
Scene 14	MS Will/reflecting shower	
	reverse on band in shower	
	Band in bg/ Will in fg-->goes back to showering	
Scene 16	ext of car passing by	
Scene 17	insert of phone	
	MS Will	
	insert of radio	
	MS Dantalion in passenger seat	
Scene 18	MWS of Henry behind camera	
Scene 19	MS Dantalion in back seat	
	Dantalion in rear view mirror	
	CU of Will straight on	
Scene 20	ext of car swerving	
Scene 21		
Scene 22		
	MS of Driver	
	CU of Driver	
	MS Will being slammed	
Scene 24	MWS of Henry behind camera, w/ PA & Steve	
	Insert of Henry's watch	
	OTS of Henry	
	OTS of PA->Steve	
Scene 25	Steady in front of Will entering	steady
	Steady Will's POV inside (Dan enters)	steady
	MS Dantalion standoff and hug gesture (straight on)	
	M OTS of Dan	
	M OTS of Will	
	profile of hug	
	insert of leg break	
	WS Steve entering->MCU of dialog	
	CU of Will's fall and getting up	
Scene 26	WS Stage (all action w/o Dantalion)	
	MS Danny (lights off)	

MS Will
CU Will
Dutch Will fg/Dantalion bg
dutch dolly MS Dantalion (low angle)
dutch dolly -->Will
circle dolly Will
circle dolly Dantalion
dutch dolly w/ Dantalion towards Will
dutch dolly w/ Will towards Dantalion
2shot Will/Dantalion
CU Director (lights off)
Dutch OTS CU Will
Dutch OTS CU Dantalion
insert knee groin
dolly w/ Will to front stage
MS Dantalion on ground & w/o Dantalion
MS Danny (lights on)
CU Danny (lights on)
MCU Will (from behind)
MS Ghost

Appendix D: Strip Boards

Sheet #: 4 4/8 pgs	Scenes: 4	EXT	Bus Stop Will snags the flyer for Hamlet auditions	Day	
Sheet #: 11 1/8 pgs	Scenes: 11	EXT	Will's House Sky goes from night to day	Morning	
Sheet #: 5 1/8 pgs	Scenes: 5	EXT	Will's House it thunders outside of Will's house	Night	
Sheet #: 9 1/8 pgs	Scenes: 9	EXT	Will's House The house is eerily still.	Night	
End of Shooting Day 1					
Sheet #: 12 pgs	Scenes: 12	INT	Will's Room Will wakes up to Dantalion's waffles		
Sheet #: 6 6/8 pgs	Scenes: 6	INT	Will's Room Will tries to read Hamlet, Dantalion appears	Night	
Sheet #: 10 1/8 pgs	Scenes: 10	INT	Will's Room Will can't sleep	Night	
End of Shooting Day 2					
Sheet #: 14 5/8 pgs	Scenes: 14	INT	Will's bathroom Will is distracted from shaving by Dantalion's marching band	Day	
Sheet #: 7 1 7/8 pgs	Scenes: 7	INT	Kitchen Dantalion reveals himself to Will	Night	
End of Shooting Day 3					
Sheet #: 3 1 2/8 pgs	Scenes: 3	INT	Makeup Room Will tells Steve of his desires to go back to theater	Night	
Sheet #: 8 1 3/8 pgs	Scenes: 8	INT	Makeup Room Steve asks Will about smashing plates, Will tells him about H	Day	
Sheet #: 13 3/8 pgs	Scenes: 13, 15	INT	Makeup Room Steve sets up his makeup, Will doesn't show, he calls Will	Day	
End of Shooting Day 4					
Sheet #: 18 2/8 pgs	Scenes: 22	EXT	Intersection Will's car pulls up to intersection and another car sits at the li	Day	
Sheet #: 19 1 4/8 pgs	Scenes: 25	INT	Backstage Will tries to enter auditions, Dantalion breaks his leg, Steve tr	Day	
End of Shooting Day 5					
Sheet #: 20 2 4/8 pgs	Scenes: 26	INT	Community Theater Auditorium Will's audition is plagued by Dantalion's antics	Day	

End of Shooting Day 6				
Sheet #: 17 6/8 pgs	Scenes: 18, 24	INT	Film Set Henry waits impatiently for Will to show up	Day
Sheet #: 1 3/8 pgs	Scenes: 1	INT	Cabin Livingroom Ash and Linda scared in the room	Night
Sheet #: 2 2 2/8 pgs	Scenes: 2	INT/	CABIN Dantalion takes down Ash, revealed as filmset	Night
End of Shooting Day 7				
Sheet #: pgs	Scenes:			
Sheet #: 15 2/8 pgs	Scenes: 16, 20	EXT	City street 16 - Will's car passes by , 20 - Will's car swerves from lane to	Day
Sheet #: 16 1 7/8 pgs	Scenes: 17, 19, 21, 23	INT	Will's car Will tries to get to auditions, Dantalion antagonizes him	Day

Vita

David LeBlanc was born in Omaha, Nebraska, but was raised primarily in Georgia. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in film production from the University of New Orleans in 2008. He moved to Los Angeles, California to attend Cinema Makeup School's makeup training program and finished in December of 2008. David began pursuing his MFA in film production at the University of New Orleans in August of 2009, where he was a graduate assistant for the FTCA department.