

ABSTRACT

Directing, Producing, and Co-writing the Short Film, *The Gorilla*

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This thesis details the journey of co-writing, producing and directing the short film, *The Gorilla*. In addition to the documented events, it will also explore the difficulties in making a comedic film, and the choices that were made in the creation of this film based on certain film theories, personal experiences, and comedic film influences.

Directing, Producing, and Co-writing the Short Film, *The Gorilla*

by

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A Thesis

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The following is the documentation of the process I undertook in order to imagine, co-write, produce, and finally direct the short film, *The Gorilla*. *The Gorilla* is a comedy based on the comic structures of late film studies professor Gerald Mast (6). Mast lists eight basic structures:

1. Boy meets girl
2. Parody
3. Reductio as absurdum
4. Social class comparison
5. The comic hero
6. Riffing
7. Melodrama
8. The fatal flaw

Two of these structures in particular, satire and reductio ad absurdum, are the basis for my film. I have taken the traits of alpha male idiosyncrasies and expanded them to absurdity by likening dominant human males to gorillas and dogs. I will examine this film and other films that use this trait as a satirical metaphor for a comedic device.

Comedic films require an understanding of the complexities of relationships and social norms in order to elicit the proper response, which in this case would be laughter. I will explore these norms and why they are used to create comedic situations. I will then

discuss the challenges of making films in the comedy genre. This film is my exploration into a comedy narrative and the how and why of making a comedy.

Educational and Professional Goals

My professional goals are two fold. First I want to continue to learn how to create film comedies. Making films is a continuous learning experience, and making comedies is not an easy task. Second, I want to be able to teach what I've learned to students in a collegiate environment. I feel that giving back to students the lessons I learned during my filmmaking experiences can help them with theirs.

During my undergraduate studies, I did not make any short films of my own, but I helped make several. Through assisting as a gaffer, I learned how light and shadows are shaped using flags, silks, scrims, and dimmers. I also learned how to position lights in order to achieve a desired brightness. As a grip I was challenged to identify and operate several different types of clamps and rigging that would allow lights to be placed in strategic ways. During the shooting of a graduate student's short film I was the assistant camera operator, which gave me the opportunity to better understand lens selection and shot composition. I also learned how to set up a camera to properly select frames per second, shutter speed, color temperature, and ISO. In addition to other students' short films I also reinforced my skills through setting up lighting designs for a professor's Advanced Digital Production and Lighting and Cinematography classes. In particular, I learned how to set up a four point lighting plot for interviewing and how to properly use a green and blue screen.

It was not until I was the first assistant director on a feature film, *Blur Circle*, that I truly fell in love with filmmaking. Being the first assistant director (1st AD) gave me a

glimpse into almost the entire process of film production. During that time, I was part of the preproduction process, where I really learned what goes into planning. I learned about the proper paperwork and permissions that need to be in order for actors, extras, and locations. I also learned about funding as well as networking in order to achieve the goals that were established by the script and director. One of the most important things I learned was the importance of the schedule and how it is created. The different and conflicting schedules that actors and locations have along with night shoots, day shoots, emotional scenes, and the natural progression of the script are factors that have to be taken into account when created a schedule. When production started, I learned the importance of sticking to that schedule. As the 1st AD, I was continuously checking my watch to make sure the production was on time. Another aspect of being a 1st AD is that I was also the Safety Officer. This was a very important position, because people's lives could potentially be harmed or lost. Set safety was something I would constantly check, as well as proper clothing and hydration of the cast and crew. The last aspect of production that was significant to me was the proper workflow and language of the production. What is said to start the shot off, what is said when moving to a different shot, what is said at the end of the day, when someone is done shooting for the film, and what is finally said at the end of the shoot, are all part of creating a rhythm that helps carry the production along.

Shortly after *Blur Circle*, I created a short film comedy, *Dual Interests*, and once again I learned a lot about preproduction and postproduction. The lessons I learned on *Dual Interests* were significant. Most of these lessons were learned by the mistakes that I had made, one of which was focus. I learned decisions about depth of field can be very

expensive to fix, and if you are shooting something with a green screen background, an out-of-focus character will be a challenge to key around. I also learned that the right lighting and camera combination can create a wide dynamic range in the color gamut that is very critical in color timing during the post process. Aside from the lessons learned, the most rewarding experience was to see it played in a theater in front of over a hundred people who were laughing at humorous situations that I had created. This has left little doubt in my mind that I want to create comedies. *The Gorilla* is the next step to expanding my knowledge in filmmaking as well as comedies. I am hoping to learn more about producing this film in terms of budget and the associated paperwork that goes with it. I also want to improve my skills as a director in communicating the performance I want from my actors. It is also my hope that *The Gorilla* will compete in the film festival circuit and allow me to be able to continue my education in the form of a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Degree, which I hope will allow me to pursue my ultimate goal of university teaching.

In the professional world, I have worked in the field of academia, specifically film and digital media, for over seven years now. Although I have not been in a faculty role, I have found great satisfaction in being able to share my knowledge with the students that come through both our bachelors and masters degree programs. Professionally, I would like to become a professor of film and would need to receive a terminal degree, which would be the MFA, as stated previously. I feel that to teach, one must continuously be learning. I cannot teach what I do not know, so it is imperative that I make films, so that through experience and application I can better prepare myself as an educator. I am very

fortunate to be in a position where I can be a part of the filmmaking process that I love, as well as to be able to be in an environment where I can also teach.

Genre and Theme

The Gorilla is a comedy about the dynamics of a male dominated workplace and how it is reflected by the animal kingdom. For comedic purposes, I have literally blurred the lines between the human world and the animal world. French philosopher, Henri Bergson, stated that, “You may laugh at an animal, but only because you have detected in it some human attitude or expression...it is always because of some resemblance of man, of the stamp he gives it or the use he puts to it” (Bergson, 3-4). The comedic value that I have created with *The Gorilla*, may seem to be in contrast to Bergson’s statement, but the reason it is funny is not because a gorilla or a dog is funny, but because a human is acting like one. Although the content of the film is a comment on the social dominance of alpha males, it is merely the backdrop to an internal conflict with the characters themselves. I am making fun of not just alpha males, but the entire social environment that they create. I find that through comedy I can make a certain statement, but the audience can still laugh whether they agree or not. As Andre Bazin put it, “Comedy was in reality the most serious genre in Hollywood, in the sense that it reflected, through the comic mode, the deepest moral and social beliefs of American life” (Bazin, 35).

I am not trying to reach America’s deepest moral beliefs in this film, but Bazin’s words are a testament to the importance of comedy as a cathartic genre. What I mean by this, is that since comedies make fun of our highly regarded social norms, we can, in a sense, be cleansed by our own apprehension of these norms. The research I did to prepare for this film was on how to make a comedy. I looked at the different types of

comedy, the structures of comedy, the timing of comedy, and the acting of comedy. Once I found the structure that I wanted to base my film on, I studied the films that I wanted to emulate, but in my own original way. As previously mentioned, I based my film on the structure of the absurd comedy. The absurd comedy uses a type of humor that can be unreasonable or illogical. It does not have to be completely silly or superficial, but can be used as form of argument such as with reduction ad absurdum. As Mast puts it, “the reductio ad absurdum has served as the basis for both pure farce and bitter intellectual argument” (Mast, 6). I will admit, though, that my film is more centered in farce than intellectual argument. In this structure, the element that I used was an exaggeration of the alpha male archetype. This is a simple and identifiable character type that author Geoff King says in his book, *Film Comedy*, that “the result (of which) is the creation of ‘the intensity, extremity, and simplicity that is essential to farce’”(King, 9). To create conflict, I added another alpha, and pit the two against each other for the admiration of their non-alpha male coworker.

A theme of the film is Sigmund Freud’s concept of projection. Simply put, the negative trait that a person has and does not want to confront is projected onto another. In the case of *The Gorilla*, both Earl and Doland project their animalistic behavior onto each other and use Marcus as a middleman. Projection is used by all of us as a defense mechanism according to Freud (136). It is how we deal with the idiosyncrasies that we do not like about ourselves. The lesson, if you will, is to look internally at the characteristics of another’s personality that you dislike. Poor Marcus has to deal with coworkers’ problems individually as well as when they are all together. The psychology of projection is seen in Doland’s lines when he is talking to Marcus about Earl:

MARCUS

Doland, wait. What did you mean earlier when you said that Earl has “almost nothing wrong with him?”

DOLAND

He has a trigger.

MARCUS

He has a trigger?

...

DOLAND

It’s really no big deal. He’s such a good guy. But now and then something just...comes out...

It is reciprocated later on when Earl is talking to Marcus about Doland:

EARL

Well...he’s a great guy. You know, a great guy. But there’s just one little thing.

MARCUS

What?

EARL

He has a trigger.

Doland and Earl are at odds with each other because the neurosis that they both have is something of which they are ashamed. The desire to have Marcus on their respective sides is a way to reinforce the denial of their own neurosis. I picked this type of conflict because the struggle that Marcus faces is a fairly common dilemma among a group of three friends, which is something audiences can relate to. When two of the friends talk about the other to the “third wheel,” the resulting frustration of being pulled both ways can lead to the destruction of all three friendships. This is not always a negative result, because the “middle man” can finally see that he needs neither friendship to define himself. Likewise, the two arguing friends might realize what they have done to drive

the third away and repent of their transgressions. Unfortunately my characters, save Marcus, continue to be oblivious to their shortcomings. The consequence of this behavior ultimately leads to Marcus being sick with both of them, and all he can say is “nope”.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The Gorilla is an absurd satire. Comedy is a very subjective genre that can be difficult to create. In my research of comedy and what makes people laugh, I have looked at a number of scholars that have determined some basic patterns that comic films follow. These films do not necessarily have to be comedies, but have elements of comedy in them. I have tried to utilize some of these patterns or at least keep them in mind when I was co-writing *The Gorilla*. The writing, cinematography, sound, score, and editing all play a part make this a comedy, and were all given consideration from these theoretical influences.

Henri Bergson was a French philosopher and professor during the early 1900's. He published an essay called *Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1911). Bergson's idea of laughter is based on the exploitation of the rigidity of human life. He states, as law, "The attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine" (Bergson, 29). According to Bergson, the interruption of this mechanical behavior is comic in nature. He uses an example of a man jogging and then tripping and falling down. The man, prior to the fall, was engaged the machine-like operation of jogging, which was then interrupted by the fall, and therefore comic. In *The Gorilla*, I have used the idea that three men playing poker should be pretty normal and mechanical if you will, but then I interrupt this normal behavior with two of the three people who literally act like animals.

Bergson also explores this robot like characteristic in facial forms as well. “Automatism, inelasticity, habit that has been contracted and maintained, are clearly the causes why a face makes us laugh” (Bergson, 25). These gestures and facial expressions are key components in my film. I wanted my actors to embrace their animal roles in movement as well as expression. Only in this way can the actor make the characters believe that their psychosis is real, and because the characters believe, the audience will believe to. Therefore, if the audience believes in this interruption of life they will laugh at it.

Gerald Mast was a professor of English who studied films and film history. His book, *The Comic Mind* (1973), was an integral part of my research into comedy. His eight different comedy structures have proved to be useful guides in creating *The Gorilla*. When looking at how these different structures are used to create a comedy, I am better prepared to create a clearly defined film, but I can also use these structures when studying other comic films.

Mast also had a view of comedy being the destruction of society. “In short, they (comedies) expose human folly and present no cure for folly is an incurable human disease...” (338). The idea that comedies “expose folly,” and folly in turn destroys society, is something that resonates with me. I am not saying I’m an anarchist, far from it, but I feel that the imagined status quo does not allow for levity. My goal is to take what we would call normal and turn it on its end, which will then produce the correct response, which is laughter. Mast once again says, “Comedy is truly the foe of progress and the social order” (340).

Although I have used Mast's plot structures in this paper, I have found other source material that has furthered my understanding of film comedy. In *The World of Comedy: Five Takes on Funny*, Wes D. Gehring's insight into screwball comedies, especially those of Cary Grant, made me struggle with whether or not to introduce a love interest into the story. In regards to the screwball films, I believe that Gehring's idea of a dominant female and submissive or incompetent male can be somewhat translated into the male relationships of my film. Although there is no romantic relationship between any of my characters, the presence of the dominant force (Earl) and a weaker (Marcus) follow what Gehring says when writing about the female characters of Barbra Stanwyck in *The Lady Eve* (1941) and Irene Dunne in *My Favorite Wife* (1940):

The funnier, more traditional example presents first wife Irene Dunne's in-film comic manipulation of Cary Grant in *My Favorite Wife*, when she "directs" how he should end it with his second wife (Gail Parick). While Stanwyck's "direction" of Fonda might be labeled omnipotent narration because the antihero male is unaware of her, Dunne's assumption of the director's role follows more customary lines (Gehring, 131).

Gehring gives credit to Stanley Cavell for observing that Stanwyck's character is like the director of the film and that the male character is likened to the audience (131). I have used this idea to create two characters who, in their own way, direct the antihero, Marcus, in how to act.

Theoretical Influences

As previously stated, the bulk of my research is in the field of comedy theory. Comedy, defined by Geoff King, is "a work that is designed in some way to provoke laughter or humour on the part of the viewer" (King, 2). This is a basic definition of comedy, but a more technical view by Mast gives insight to the genre. "Inevitably, the

comic film “says” something about the relation of man to society. The comedy either (a) upholds the values and assumptions of society, urging the comic character to reform his ways and conform to the societal expectations; or (b) maintains that the antisocial behavior of the comic character is superior to society’s norms” (Mast, 20). For the purposes of this paper, I will use Mast’s definition, because of the relationship of alpha males to society.

Why is a film comedy funny? Film theorist Andrew Horton says that “no plot is inherently funny” and that “any plot is potentially comic, melodramatic, or tragic, or perhaps all three at once” (Horton, 1). Comedy is so subjective, but there are common structures that lead people to laughter. Mast outlines eight different comedy plot structures that are common to film comedies. There are probably more than what he has listed, and some films will have multiple structures in them, but I will choose to focus on the few that represent my methodology in researching for this film.

The first structure I wish to discuss on his list is the screwball comedy. This is a boy meets girl type of film that incorporates a strong or controlling female character whose goal is to seduce a reluctant male. This type of comedy has been associated with the romantic comedy due to the male/female relationships. The function of this kind of comedy is generally in the eccentricities of the female character. Gehring states that the term screwball “probably has ties with such late nineteenth-century colloquial expressions as having a “screw loose” (being crazy) and becoming “screwy” (drunk)” (Gehring, 129). Some examples of this kind of comedy include: *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *Philadelphia Story* (1940), and *Something about Mary* (1998). My first film, *Dual Interests*, had elements of this kind, and it is a structure that I am very fond of. The

decision to not include a male/female relationship in *The Gorilla* was based on time as well as plot focus. Initially I wanted a woman in the film, but since the actual plot was focused on the relationships with men playing poker, the idea was quickly squashed. The lack of romance however, does not affect the idea of a controlling character directing a vulnerable character in my film. Instead of a dominant woman, I have made the character of Earl super dominant and paired him with a reluctant male character, Marcus. The goal of seduction is the same, but in my film, Earl is trying to persuade Marcus to be apart of the alpha male club, not for love.

The second structure is parody, and, because it is in the same vein, I will also address satire. “(Parody) has affectionate fun at the expense of a given form or structure; satire more aggressively attacks the flaws and follies of mankind” (Gehring, 173).

Parody commonly concerns itself with cinematic genre or specific films and makes fun of them, generally by exaggeration of stereotypical tropes. Many comedies that spoof westerns, such as *Blazing Saddles* (1974), or horror in films such as *Scary Movie* (2000), can be considered parodies of genre, with the latter example also being a parody of a specific film, *Scream* (1996). This form is the playground of my biggest inspiration for comedy, Mel Brooks. Although his brand of humor is very similar to mine, I decided to create a film that was more satirical in nature rather than parody.

“Satire is comedy with an edge and a target, usually social or political in some way” (King, 93). The political examples are films such as *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) and *Bulworth* (1998), while the social films include *The Graduate* (1967) and *Heathers* (1988). My film’s target is the social dominance of the alpha male and the consequences of his aggression. As previously stated, this film is satirical, but it has a rather blunted

edge because I am more concerned with the result of laughter than opening a dialogue about the positives and negatives of the alpha male psyche.

The next structure is what Mast calls the “riffing”(Mast, 7) structure. This is when you “take some initial situation—perhaps a place (a beach, a lake, a field), an event (auto races, a dance contest, a circus), an object (Tin Lizzies), an animal (lion), and then run off a series of gags that revolve around this central situation” (Mast, 7). We recognize this now as the “running gag”. Some examples of comedies that have running gags are *A Christmas Story* (1983), because the one thing that Ralphie wants for Christmas is a Red Rider BB gun, but everyone says, “You’ll shoot your eye out.” Likewise in *The Other Guys* (2010) Captain Mauch unknowingly quotes TLC song lyrics.

This is the secondary structure of my film, and the animal of course is a gorilla. The running gag is found in both the environment as well as in the dialogue. The mise-en-scène is created with a gorilla’s environment, especially in Earl’s “man cave” or “nest” as he refers to it. There are movie posters on the walls that represent films like *King Kong* (1933), *Mighty Joe Young* (1998), and *Planet of the Apes* (1968). He also has ficus trees and other greenery around to give his nest a jungle feel. The theme also carries into the food and drink. Although the characters don’t eat, bowls of bananas are all around. As for the drink, Earl drinks a banana-flavored beer. Most importantly, Earl’s mannerisms such as scratching and beating his chest, are very much like that of a gorilla.

The last structure I will discuss is the aforementioned *reductio ad absurdum*, latin for reduction to absurdity. Mast describes this as “a simple human mistake or social question (that) is magnified, reducing the action to chaos and the social question to absurdity” (Mast, 5-6). *Reductio ad absurdum* takes a situation like a child explaining to

their mother that they want to go to the movies because all of their friends are going, and the mother replying, “If all your friends jumped off a cliff would you do the same?” In this scenario, the mother does not want the child to go to the movies, so she takes the child’s proposition to the extreme in order to create a fallacy in the child’s logic. Mast uses the example of *Dr. Strangelove* and its “proposition that man needs atomic weapons and military minds to preserve the human race” (Mast, 6) to such an extreme level that the world is destroyed and the audience is left with a nuclear free mindset.

What I have done with *The Gorilla* is taken a human trait and magnified it. I have taken the stereotype of the alpha male and amped it up on steroids, making Earl think he is a gorilla and Doland think he is a dog. My argument is that if the intimidating behavior of an alpha mentality is left unchecked, they might as well just be animals themselves. In this way I can create a world that is silly but not so imaginary as to make my characters actual animals.

Earl talks about being a gorilla and has all sorts of gorilla-like paraphernalia. Although he can talk about it, others cannot. This absurdity is part of the conflict that Marcus (who represents the normal) faces in trying not to say something that will trigger Earl into beast mode. It is further complicated by the fact that Earl baits Marcus into saying his trigger words. For example:

EARL (CONT'D)

...sometimes give me the run around, send me up to Dallas for meaningless tasks. And I hate that place. Just a regular concrete...uh...concrete...

MARCUS

Jungle.

Doland gulps. Earl glares at Marcus, his mind turning.

Earl does not do this intentionally; he just always has this idea of a gorilla in the back of his mind. This idea is further amplified by his constant competition and drive to win.

EARL (CONT'D)

Look, Marcus. I'm going to give you a piece of advice. If you want to do more than just survive in this company, you have got to be an alpha.

MARCUS

An alpha?

EARL

You know what that means?

MARCUS

I think so.

EARL

It means you get mad. Play hard. Think about it. To be number one, you have to BE number one.

As ridiculous as it is for Marcus, another bomb has been dropped as Earl confides in Marcus that Doland has a trigger and thinks he is a dog. One might think that realization of Earl's would make him call into question his own trigger, but Earl remains oblivious. This bounces Marcus between two people with triggers that cannot be breached or else a catastrophe might occur.

Psychoanalysis and Projection

Psychoanalysis is a group of theories, first established by Sigmund Freud, that are used to explain behavior. These theories can also be used to analyze films, but my intention is to use them to explain the neurosis of two of my characters, Earl and Doland. More specifically, I am just using the phenomena of projection, but in order to do that I must explain some basic ideas of psychoanalysis.

The structural theory in psychoanalysis breaks down the personality of a person into the id, ego, and superego. In basic terms, the id represents desire to meet our most primitive needs, such as being hungry, thirsty, or sexually aroused. The superego is the part of the personality that keeps all those desires in check. It is the strict and ridged moral side that employs things like guilt and shame to stop any kind of fulfilled desire. This brings us to the ego, which is like the referee between the id and the superego. Its goal is to keep everything in balance, but in order to do that, it has to act like a magician to the superego audience. I use the analogy of a magician because the ego will use tricks in order to fool the superego, and in doing so, it actually fools itself. These tricks are called defense mechanisms, and they come in many forms; repression, regression, introjection, denial, and projection to name a few.

Projection is one of the defense mechanism that the ego employs to battle the superego. It takes an attribute we do not like in ourselves and projects it onto another person. For example, if a person who smokes is trying to quite, they are more likely to be hostile towards smokers because it is a trait that they do not like in themselves. Anna Freud offers a more complex explanation of projection:

An ego which with the aid of the defense mechanism of projection develops along this particular line introjects the authorities to whose

criticism it is exposed and incorporates them in the superego. It is then able to project the prohibited impulses outward. Its intolerance of other people precedes its severity toward itself. It learns what is regarded as blameworthy but protects itself by means of this defense mechanism from unpleasant self-criticism (Freud, 119).

In *The Gorilla*, both Earl and Doland use projection to show disapproval of their own animalistic tendencies. At first the audience sees Earl as a person with psychotic delusions of being a gorilla, but by the midpoint of the film we see that Doland is inflicted with a similar malady.

If we follow Earl's psychosis, we see that Earl has a desire to be more primal, so much so that certain words can trigger this reaction. This is something that he feels he cannot control, and, being an aggressively driven person, he does not like that over which he has no control. In order to satisfy his superego, he pretends that he does not have this affliction and instead attacks a subordinate (Doland) with the same affliction. This is illustrated in the argument scene at the climax of the film.

Doland is in a similar situation. He is also a driven person that admires Earl for his competitive personality and wishes to be like Earl. His desire is so strong that he mirrors Earl's defect and reacts to it the same way Earl does. Looking at the causality of Doland's delusion is not as important, in terms of this film, as his projection of disdain onto Earl. The projection is what creates the conflict in the story.

In a real world situation this would be extremely dangerous, and professional help would be required for both Earl and Doland. This is an absurd comedy though, and so Marcus is placed in this dangerous circumstance for the amusement of the crowd. Marcus provides the other two characters with a validation to their projection. If they can convince Marcus that the other is crazy, they will be able to further manifest their

projections onto the other. This puts a timid guy like Marcus in a difficult predicament. He wants to get along with everyone and “fit in” with his new work mates, but he refuses to adopt their extreme behavior. It is important to note that despite Marcus’s rejection of his coworkers’ demands, he has become more independent and possibly more alpha-like.

Filmic Influences

The Gorilla was largely inspired by films and directors with a comedic and high-energy way of telling a story through editing. Directors like Edgar Wright and Guy Ritchie have editing styles that creatively control the timing of cuts that can be very funny. These cuts are sometimes long takes that linger just a bit longer, making them funny. In Edgar Wright’s film, *Hot Fuzz* (2007), the two main characters jump over a hedge to escape the blast of an old water mine, only to discover it is a dud. The camera stays on them, almost to the point of being uncomfortable to show the embarrassment of the situation. These cuts can also be short bursts of energy that bring life to a scene. In Guy Ritchie’s film, *RocknRolla* (2008), instead of having a drawn out love scene, Guy opts to create scene of 11 shots in about 12 seconds. The scene shows the entire process of copulation just in close up facial expressions and audio cues, followed by a shot of a fly being zipped up and the ending shot of a cigarette being lit. Some scenes in *The Gorilla* were written to utilize this style of editing as well as cinematography.

Edgar Wright’s films have influenced many parts of *The Gorilla*. His style of comedy and his use of editing in montage to tell a joke have been something I have tried to emulate. Most notable to me is the “tap water” scene in *The World’s End* (2013). In this scene, Gary King (Simon Pegg) and his pals walk into a pub, and he asks the bar keep for five beers, but one of his cohorts, Andy Knightley (Nick Frost), interrupts and

says “No, sorry, can we have four of those and a tap water please.” After hearing this, the camera pushes into King as he exclaims his disdain for Knightley’s request. The next series of shots are a back-and-forth of a close up of the bar keep’s hand as it pulls the tap handle down, and then beer filling a glass. This happens four times with each shot of the bar keep’s hand a little closer and the music building louder to an anticlimactic cut of the bar keep’s hand filling the glass with water. The use of consecutive/repetitive shots is something that I wanted to use in the film for the comedic effect, as well as a way to tell the parts of the story that might be a bit mundane. For example, in *The Gorilla*, I wanted to show time passing by, but I did not want to use a generic montage. Instead, I wanted to put a joke in the montage, so in my script I have quick cuts of beer bottles being opened, but each hand has a different bottle opener based on the animal that character represents. The exception to this is Marcus who has a regular bottle opener and fumbles trying to open his bottle to show his inability to fit in with Earl and Doland.

Wright’s scene transitions are generally done in a quick and funny way, which was another inspiration in making *The Gorilla*. In *Hot Fuzz*, Nicholas Angel (Simon Pegg) is a police officer who is being transferred to a remote village far away from anywhere. The journey to get to the village is full of shots that show Angel holding a plant while sullenly looking ahead. What I like about these shots is the framing is the same but in different locations, each one more rural than the last. What I wanted in *The Gorilla* was that the opening shot of Marcus and Doland match the same framing when they are at the front door in the next scene. This will connect the two scenes and because the shot is of their backs, which is unusual, I think that it will be funny.

Another one of Wright's scenes that inspired me was "the plan" scene in *Shaun of the Dead* (2004). Once again, Simon Pegg plays the lead, Shaun, who is explaining to Nick Frost's character, Ed, his plan to save his mother and ex-girlfriend while killing his zombie stepdad and winning his ex-girlfriend back in the process. These scenes are done with several whip-pans, which I want to put into my film. Whip-pans are a type of shot where the camera is focused on a subject a very quickly whips away from one side to another. It is a very jarring shot, but when paired with a sound effect like a whoosh, the effect can be very humorous. When Marcus and Doland arrive, Marcus is warned not to make any mention of jungles, apes, or anything else gorilla related or Earl will act like a gorilla. The script then calls for the first shots of Earl's man cave. There are whip-pans of various gorilla themed movie posters, jungle themed screensaver, and then the last shot is of a bunch of bananas.

Guy Ritchie creates an environment of intensity with shots that zoom in as well as slow down. For example, in *Snatch* (2000), Bullet-Tooth Tony (Vinnie Jones) calmly sits down while three men with masks point guns at him. When Tony tells the men that they are frauds by pointing out that the sides of their guns say replica, the shot zooms into the side of the gun and spells out the word "replica" in jump cuts of each letter. The camera zooms out to show the three men now looking at their guns. Tony then pulls out his own gun and notes the word "Desert Eagle 5.0" written on the side of his gun. The camera shows the three men looking down at Tony's gun, and then a zoom shot of the side of the gun in the same manner of jump cuts as the previous gun. For *The Gorilla*, I wanted to use the same style for the scene where Marcus and Earl are discussing Doland by the

refrigerator. For the zoom-in shot I have the bottle of banana bread beer instead of the gun.

The whip-pans of Edgar Wright and the intense zoom-ins of Guy Ritchie add humor to their scenes and causes the audience to actively participate in the films. Instead of just making a bland transition or a dull montage, these directors use editing to expand the comedy. Through the inspiration of these two filmmakers, I hope to create a comedy that is told in a way gives the audience energy, and most importantly, laughter.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Production Logistics

Making a film requires volumes of preparation and organization. The logistics of this operation was something to be considered very carefully because every decision that was made could have potentially changed the quality of the film. In this section, I will discuss the choices I made in the preproduction of *The Gorilla*.

I produced this film myself which gave me more to worry about, but it also allowed me more control over the entire production. This production was very important to me personally as well as academically, so I did not want to put that in the hands of someone else that might not care as much.

Because of my decision to produce, I started by preselecting my locations. Ultimately, I chose to shoot the majority of the film in my own home. In my house I had the freedom to create the environment I had envisioned and was able to keep it that way until the shoot was done. I also wanted to have a place to keep all the film gear and avoid having to pack it up every night. Finally, shooting in my house provided my craft services person the convenience of having a refrigerator as well as an oven for meal preparation.

Producing a film demands preplanning, detail, and most of all, money. I knew that if I planned it right, I would be able to save money by anticipating potential problems. Of course no one can plan for every event, but some of the more common

missteps can be avoided. One way I planned to avoid overspending was through budgeting. I had created a budget that listed all of the props, set design, wardrobe, and food items that I needed to purchase. I had calculated the amount I was willing to spend, and I looked for the best bargain I could find.

In terms of camera equipment, I planned to use the Arri Amira camera with Sony CineAlta lenses. I had two main reasons I wanted to use this camera. First, I felt that the camera had a more cinematic image quality than the other high-end film cameras that were available to me. This choice was subjective, but it was a camera that helped create the look I wanted to achieve. Secondly, the Amira boasts an “exposure latitude of over 14 stops”(Arri.com). There were some exterior shots that were outside at night and I wanted to be able to use a camera that could give me a clear image without a lot of digital noise in lowlight conditions. The only downside to shooting with the Amira was that its maximum resolution is High Definition (1920x1080 pixels), as opposed to Digital Cinema Initiatives (4096x2160) or Ultra High Definition (3840x2160). Having the extra pixels could have helped in reframing shots, but that was something I sacrificed to get the quality of image I was after. In addition to my own opinions, I had consulted with at least three Baylor University film professors who were in an agreement with my decision. For these reasons, I told my director of photography why I wanted to shoot on the Amira for this production, and he agreed that it was the best choice.

I have no patience for wasted time, especially on set. In addition to actors not having memorized lines, a lack of storyboards and shot lists are a huge time suck on set. To alleviate this, I had an initial meeting with my director of photography to storyboard. I also included my editor. I have found that having both the cinematographer and editor

in a meeting like this helps to reduce shots that won't be used. I also understand that both people might not see eye-to-eye, but in the end every decision is the director's to make, and I wanted options open to me. It was also important to have the editor there, because successful execution of the style of the film was very dependent on the edit.

During the meeting, my cinematographer brought some interesting and useful ideas to the table. For example, the opening shot was going to be using a slider, but we really didn't have a very good slider, so he suggested using a track dolly with a jib on it. He also talked about an overhead shot of everybody playing at the poker table. I wanted to know his thoughts on what I felt was the most important shot in the film, which is when the poker table is turned over. The cinematographer suggested using a wider-angle lens, but shooting it higher up so that the tarp that protected the carpet would not be seen. After the meeting, he was able to send me the shot list so that I could create my schedule.

I was also able to show my cinematographer the location of the film so that he could have a better idea of the shots we needed. A large part of the set was my master bedroom, which was a converted garage. He liked the high ceilings of the "man cave" in order to rig the lighting above, and he liked having enough room to move the camera around.

With solid preparation and smart budgeting, I made the production as smooth as possible. As the director, I wanted to make sure that saving time and money did not affect the vision that I had for the film. There was a balance I had to maintain, as well as some creativity in keeping my vision alive and not overspending. I knew what I wanted the look of the film to be like, and I justified my decisions in the script analysis portion of this chapter.

Script Analysis

In this section, I will detail intention and motivations of the story that influenced production decisions. *The Gorilla* is a comedy narrative that follows Marcus through a poker night with a coworker, Doland, and their boss, Earl. The intention of my film is to have the audience escape from the normal and see the absurdity in an otherwise mundane event, and to ultimately laugh.

The journey of *The Gorilla* started as a brainstorming process of “wouldn’t it be funny if...”. My initial thought was an idea about out two coworkers, one of whom was a new guy, who go to a third coworker’s house to play cards. Before the third coworker opens the door, the other coworker tells the new guy that the third coworker likes to dress in drag on the weekends and that he should pretend not to notice. I felt that the awkwardness of the situation would be funny. I also felt that putting a more masculine male in the role would be a humorous visual, but admittedly, due to the changing social climate, I did not want audiences to feel that I was being negative to alternative lifestyles.

I ran the idea by my writing partner, and he suggested changing the coworker from drag into a gorilla. It was an interesting idea, and the fact that instead of emasculating the coworker, we would hyper-masculate him. At first, he would literally dress up like a gorilla on the weekends, but working with the costume raised several questions. Would he wear a mask? How would his performance be? Could he play cards in the suit? I eventually decided that he would slowly become the gorilla throughout the film.

My cowriter again presented another idea to me. He said that at the end, what if after judging the gorilla’s character, it turns out that both of the other two then act like

animals as well. I liked the idea of a surprise ending, so we continued in that direction. We worked over what the other two animals could be. Initially it was a bird and a mole, because we liked the idea of putting thick glasses on the mole character that we named Marcus. Marcus was the new guy, and we wanted a relatively timid animal to represent him. Then we felt that creating a hole for him to crawl into was too much work, so we changed his character to the bird. As a side note, the bird was originally supposed to be named Donald, but my cowriter made a typo and it turned out Doland. Then Doland's character was changed to a dog, and I decided to keep the name.

Once we had a rough draft down, my thesis advisor suggested that we needed more jokes, as well as more of something happening. This was a fair assessment. I believe that I had concentrated too much on the montage Edgar Wright-like scenes and did not really incorporate any real substance. My cowriter and I sat down and got back to work. At this point I was thinking about my set design, and how to incorporate jokes in the mise-en-scene. I thought of gorilla-themed movie posters as well as bananas and jungle greenery. My cowriter came up with the idea of themed beer bottle openers. We put these in the script but it was still missing something.

My cowriter sent me a draft that he worked on over the Christmas break. He had found what was missing. In order to create more conflict, my cowriter created a scene where Earl, the gorilla, tells Marcus that Doland thinks he is a dog. This scene now pulls Marcus between two people that think that they are animals, and at the end, Marcus turns out to be a bird.

This was our fourth draft, and my thesis advisor seemed to like it more, but he was confused about whether or not these people really turned into animals or if it was just

their delusions. During the climax of the film, Earl throws a tantrum and Marcus runs away, but when he looks back, he sees Earl as a real gorilla. Then at the closing scene of the script Marcus actually flies up into a tree and goes to sleep in a nest. At this point I decided to get rid of the gorilla suit completely and kill the whole nest in the tree idea. That way there would be no confusion as to whether these people actually were animals.

This created a new problem. How would I reveal the bird joke at the end? I thought that maybe he could put a cd into the radio that played the “Chicken Dance” and then start clucking, but we couldn’t find who owned the rights to the Chicken Dance. I then decided to cut the bird from the script and make Marcus completely normal.

After those changes, my thesis advisor made a note that our first and second scenes didn’t have a good impact and that they were very similar and really stated the same thing. This again was true. We had decided to drop the plot point that Earl thought he was a gorilla in scene one. I changed that to scene two, right when Earl opens the door, as it was in my original concept.

Setting

To create the world in which the actors played, I asked a film student to help me with set design. She had previously worked with a set designer on a feature film, and I felt that she could use that experience to help me. Since I had already chosen my house as the location for the majority of my film, I had her come to the location and brainstorm some ideas. I showed her my living room, which is where I initially wanted to shoot. She did not like it because it did not look like a “man cave”. She was right; the walls are teal and the furniture is ultra modern and minimalistic, not an environment where you can easily envision a bunch of guys drinking, smoking, and playing poker. I then decided to

change the setting to my master bedroom and turn it into a “man cave”. She did suggest gorilla themed movie posters, playing cards, poker chips, banana themed beer bottles, and all types of greenery.

Costume/Color

Earl is represented as the alpha male silverback gorilla and wears a silver dress shirt and black slacks to represent that look. I wanted Doland and Marcus to look like they just got off work, so I put them in dress shirts and slacks as well. For Doland, I gave him a tan shirt and black slacks, which could represent the natural colors of a dog. Marcus on the other hand, would wear a blue shirt with khaki pants to represent the average Joe kind of outfit. One other requirement that I had was that I did not want any of my actors to wear white. I find that white shirts can be problematic when it comes to lighting because of their reflectivity. In addition, it is hard to hide wires and lavalier microphones in white shirts. I did not want my cinematographer or audio production person to have to deal with those issues, so I required that no one wear white.

Acting

I wanted to cast actors who were in their late twenties or early thirties, because I felt the maturity of the actors will make the film look less like a student film. Once I changed the concept to a gorilla, I decided to cast my friend for the part of Earl. I also cast a professional actor and theatre professor to play the part of Doland. Finally, I cast a college senior, who has had limited acting experience, as Marcus. The student is in his early twenties but has a mature look to him.

The person who played the part of Earl is 6'2" and is a very broad man. He also has a natural "alpha male" air about him. Unfortunately he had no acting experience, but he is a very outgoing person who likes to be the center of attention. Of course being an extrovert does not necessarily translate into acting, but I felt that since he was physically right for the film I would work on his acting in rehearsals.

The actor who played the part of Doland is a wonderful acting veteran who was in my last short film. I had the utmost confidence in his abilities. I was also hoping that his role as a Baylor University professor would add a level of professionalism to the set. I felt that if he could act silly by pretending to be a dog, it might have helped Earl's actor in being comfortable acting like a gorilla.

Finally, the actor who played the character of Marcus was also in my last short film. He has also acted in a few other student productions and matched the physical attributes of the Marcus character. As previously stated, I wanted Marcus to be smaller in stature but not necessarily young looking. He can grow a full beard and has thinning hair, which gave the character a more mature look. I had envisioned the Shaun character, played by Simon Pegg, in *Shaun of the Dead* (2004).

In working on numerous student sets, I have seen so much time wasted on actors who do not know their lines. In their defense, most actors are handed a script right when they get on set, which is generally a poor decision on the part of the director. I had given my actors a script well ahead of shooting so they could start preparing. In addition to giving the script in advance, I also scheduled table reads and rehearsals.

Lighting

I had previously talked with another Baylor University professor, who teaches a class in Lighting and Cinematography, about the approach I should take. He suggested that if the film is a comedy it should not be a very dramatic type of lighting, but it should also not be extremely high key like a sitcom either. My cinematographer and I looked at some of the Edgar Wright films to get an idea of the look we were after. One was the aforementioned opening bar scene in *The World's End*, the other was the plan scene in *Shaun of the Dead*. The first scene has just enough shadow to make the characters have shape. The later scene shows a deep depth-of-field that puts the background slightly out of focus. This allows the audience to recognize everything in the background, but not in focus enough so that the characters blend into it.

Shot Selection/Camera Angle/Camera Movement

I wanted to stick to the storyboard as much as possible in terms of shot selection. Since there were three characters sitting around a poker table for most of the film, the master shot was a wide shot of Earl facing the camera and the backs of Marcus and Doland. There were additional shots in medium over-the-shoulder and close-up of all three characters. I wanted a good amount of coverage, and I felt that with the proper storyboard we got the most coverage in the most time efficient way possible.

In previous discussions with my cinematographer and editor, we agreed that certain scenes had very complex camera movement as opposed to simple coverage, so it was very important to get those shots right. For example, in the opening scene, we see a shot of a street. The camera slowly pulls back to reveal that the audience is looking through a front windshield. Once we see the backs of the two characters heads, the

character on the driver's side suddenly holds up a book entitled *How to Poker*. This causes a disruption in the calm and slow camera movement. Adding to the disruption, the serene melody that was playing immediately stops. The book that Marcus is holding is a cheesy self-help book that establishes him as a man who lacks confidence in the realm of such manly games as poker. This was all a continuous shot that had to be precise in order for the book to still be legible and, also, to see the two characters.

I shot what is called a fridge-cam shot. This was a shot where we actually put the camera in the refrigerator. In the scene we see the fridge open up and Marcus look inside. I wanted to use a wide lens because I needed to get both Marcus and Earl in the frame. As Marcus is rummaging around for a beer, Earl suddenly appears. This startles Marcus and immediately makes him uncomfortable due to Earl's close proximity. At this point, Earl confides in Marcus about Doland's trigger. This gives Earl the opportunity to have Marcus validate his projection onto Doland. After hearing this, Marcus looks over to the room where Doland is sitting and observes him scratching himself behind the ear like a dog. Marcus is dumbfounded by Earl's statement as well as what he sees, and is forced to rethink his life-choices. The scene ends with Marcus blankly staring into the refrigerator looking for answers. This is a pivotal point in the film and the camera needed to have an almost awkward look to it so lens selection is very important.

Editing

This film used editing as a tool to create comedy as well as move the story along. My approach to editing this film was similar to my approach to shot selections, I stuck to the script and the storyboard. As I co-wrote the script, what I pictured in my head was eventually made into the storyboard. The storyboard was the first physical realization of

the film. Although I wanted my editor to be creative, I wanted that creativity to be guided by the storyboard.

Timing was very important and to get it right, the edit had to be perfectly timed. In the end of the opening scene, the sequence of shots are quick cuts of seat belts being fastened, car keys spinning, and then the keys going into the ignition, all in a highly dramatic way. The intention of this was to create high energy of this mundane event, much like the suiting up of weapons shots in action films, except the end of the sequence was followed by an anticlimactic shot of a car slowing pattering by. This juxtaposition of the last two shots was a joke due to the opposite expectation that the audience would have of Marcus slowly driving as opposed to a tire screeching takeoff.

In another scene, the audience sees Doland and Marcus gaping at the sight before them. Earl then comes from behind and pats them on the back and asks what they think of his nest, which is a reference to the nest that gorillas make. From there we see quickly cut whip-pan shots of a gorilla movie posters, then a tree, and finally a bowl of bananas. This edit accomplished two things; first, it allowed us to see Earl next to Marcus and Doland, and second, it makes Marcus realize that not mentioning Earl's trigger words is going to be harder than he originally thought.

The scene ends with Earl slapping Marcus and Doland on the back and shouting, "Let's play." This leads to another series of quick cuts of the three playing poker. These shots include: chips being dropped, cards being shuffled, beer bottles being opened, cigars being lit, cards being dealt, and chips being shoved in the pot in order to show the passage of time.

There are three shots of the beer bottles in which each character opens the bottle and each character has a different bottle opener. Earl's looked like a gorilla, Doland's was a dog bone shape, and Marcus's was a kitchen bottle opener. The first two represent the animals that Earl and Doland associate with, although at this point in the story, the audience does not know about Doland yet. The last beer bottle was an ordinary kitchen bottle opener that was obviously taken from the kitchen. This showed that Marcus was ordinary and was not an experienced beer drinker because he did not even have his own bottle opener. This montage was written to be funny and not just to show a passage of time. I envisioned this scene to be cut in a way that adds another joke to the film and not just something that connects two scenes. The montage ends with a shot of Earl watching Marcus put out his cigar.

Being the cowriter, director, and producer gave me a lot of control over how this film was made, how looks, and what it is as a whole. The problem I faced was to not get overwhelmed by all of it. In writing this script, I created a simple world that was manageable as far as location, set design, and costume. The decisions I made as a director and a producer have, I hope, made *The Gorilla*, a creative, yet efficient film.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Gorilla

Below is an online link for the film *The Gorilla*.

<http://youtu.be/e0T7noA1E1s>

CHAPTER FIVE

Self-Critique and Analysis

Pre-Production and Production

In the following section of this chapter, I will discuss the issues that I have confronted during the pre-production and production phases of *The Gorilla*. Planning and organization of a production starts way before principal photography. As the producer of *The Gorilla*, I tried to make sure that all of the aspects of pre-production were addressed, so I could focus on directing during the production phase of the film. It would be very naïve for me to assume that this entire production process would be problem-free, so I tried my best to anticipate potential complications.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals are a big part of my process of filmmaking. I find that actors need to be able to play off each other, especially when they are trying to memorize their lines. This also gives them a chance to act out some of the scenes that they may not understand as well. We only had four rehearsals, and Doland's actor could only be there for one of those.

The first three rehearsals were really just table reads, but the last one was acted out. The first rehearsal was comprised of the actors playing Marcus and Earl. I read the part of Doland. I did notice that the actor playing Earl was uncomfortable making gorilla faces and noises. His reluctance was probably due to his inexperience in acting, and not wanting to feel embarrassed by acting silly. In response to his hesitation, I acted these

parts out myself to show him how I wanted him to act and to make him feel comfortable if someone else was doing it. He said he would work on it. The actor playing Marcus did well, but I encouraged him to be more reluctant sounding, almost to the point of whiny.

By the time of the second rehearsal, the script had changed somewhat, and again the actor playing Doland was unavailable because he was performing in Fort Worth, Texas. Marcus's actor had a clear vision of his character in terms of attitude and inflection, but Earl's actor still had reservations about the sounds and mannerisms that I wanted him to do. I was starting to get nervous. I talked to him again privately and he again promised that he would work on it.

I had the good fortune to finally have Doland's actor for the third rehearsal. I really wanted to see how the three actors would respond to each other. My main concern was still Earl. As far as the dialogue went he had it down. The intensity and the glaring stares were all great, but the more silly parts seemed hard for him to do. I was hoping that the actor playing Doland might help him out a little bit by his performance of acting like a dog and I think it did help. Earl's actor did seem a little more comfortable acting like a gorilla, but it still was not the level of performance I wanted. The actor playing Doland had a good idea of his character's motivations and was not afraid to go full dog, meaning that he was not afraid to bark, growl, or scratch behind his ear during rehearsal, which was a level of commitment that I wanted Earl's actor to see.

The final rehearsal was hard to schedule and again, Doland's actor could not make it. I was not worried about his performance, but I felt that having him there would strengthen the other performances. Since we didn't have him, I decided to run through

the scene that only Earl and Marcus were in. I had them act it out several times. This was much better for the actor playing Earl. I could see that he had really put forth an effort to step out of his comfort zone and embrace his inner gorilla.

Set Design

Once I had committed to the concept design that my set designer had conceptualized, I then had to start purchasing the set pieces. My set designer sent me several pictures of the set decorations as well as props. I was having a hard time with the posters because they contained copyrighted material. I discussed my concerns with my thesis advisor, who did not think it would be a problem if the pictures were in the background and out of focus. I then discussed this issue with my cinematographer and editor. My cinematographer had no problem with this, but my editor wanted to add a whip-pan shot of all the posters to create a dramatic introduction to the room. I really liked this idea, but the copyrighted poster images once again became a problem. I decided that we needed fake posters, so I asked my set designer to create some. Unfortunately she was very busy and could only do one poster, so I suggested she create a rock band poster featuring a band called *The Gorillaz*. My cowriter asked another person to create two of the posters; I wanted something with a movie theme. I also asked a collaborator to design the final poster, which I wanted to look like an inspirational poster. In the end I was very pleased with the results.

By way of props, I had my set designer also create a beer bottle label with a banana theme. I printed them out on light tan paper and cut out about eighteen of them. I then gathered empty brown beer bottles, scrubbed the old labels off of them, and then glued the new labels back on. I also purchased two bottle openers. One was shaped like

a dog bone and the other was an actual gorilla. Originally I wanted to have the gorilla bottle opener to be a banana, but both the set designer and I could not find any such product online, so I settled on the gorilla.

In retrospect, I should have insisted that the set designer be on-set during principal photography, but due to scheduling conflicts, she not able to be there. I was worrying more about props than directing the film. The most common problem was not having enough non-specific props and set dressings. For example, we had all of the banana beer bottles, but we could not use those until the gag reveal, so we needed beer bottles that were not the banana ones for the characters to use in the scene before the reveal. We also needed cigars and ashtrays. Lastly, my cinematographer requested that we purchase an additional tree to give the background some more visual detail. I had to send two of my crewmembers to acquire these items, which left me two people short for production. Having the set designer on location to resolve any last-minute details would have been a more ideal situation, and I have learned that advanced scheduling is paramount when making a film.

Scheduling

One of the areas where it became clear that I needed improvement as a producer was scheduling. Relying on people to commit to being on set for a number of days can be very difficult to achieve. All of my crewmembers were college students, and they all had busy schedules. In addition to the crew, the actors who played Earl and Doland had full-time jobs and could not be available as much as I would have liked. In order to make the scheduling work, I had to shoot the entire film in one weekend. The scheduling was very efficient. However I was thinking more as an assistant director than as a director. If

I had given myself more time during principal photography, I might have been able to work some of the kinks out in the shots that I ended up thinking did not work as well. There were some acting issues in regard to Marcus's performance as well as some shots that did not frame up as nicely as I had hoped. Ultimately, I feel that these problems are my fault for trying to spread myself too thin and not focus on my primary production job as director.

The bottom line is that if I had scheduled more days, I could have reviewed the daily takes with both my editor and cinematographer and corrected those mistakes during principle photography. In addition to the daillies, I would have also been a little more relaxed and not as rushed to get all of the shots completed, so that I could focus more on the performance.

Principal Photography

During the actual shooting of the film, I felt that my cinematographer was very good at keeping to his shot list while at the same time looking for ways to add interest to the scene. For example, in the script, we see the three characters at the entrance of the man-cave, and then the script shows a series of whip-pan cuts of the posters. My cinematographer asked if we could try a moving shot on the steadicam that would travel into the man-cave, settling on the poker table. I liked the idea and decided to let him do it.

There was some discussion about the last seatbelt-buckling scene with regard to when they would be shot. I wanted to shoot the characters that played Marcus and Doland buckling their seatbelts at night because the pervious buckling scene had been shot during the day. My cinematographer said that it would be better to use the same daytime shot to get the exposure range and just make it look like night in post-production.

I brought my editor in on the discussion and he agreed that it would not be hard to do and since those sequences are a series of quick cuts it would not be an obvious change. I agreed to this, because it made sense and because I wanted more time shooting the final scene of the film.

Acting

With regard to my directing of the actors, I felt as though I focused too much on the actor who played Earl, and not enough on the actor who played Marcus. For the actor who played Earl, I was worried that he would not be able to remember where his marks were, or to not look into the camera, and to deliver the lines in a convincing way. Since he was inexperienced in acting, I had to give him the most attention. Looking back on the final result, I realized I should have done more with the actor who played Marcus, because I can see that his performance was weak in some scenes. Doland's actor is a professional, and I had worked with him before, so besides the occasional question from him, I really felt like I did not have to worry about his performance.

I scheduled Earl's actor to start his scenes on the second day of shooting. I picked a very simple scene where it was just Earl and Marcus's actors at the refrigerator. I did this because it was a short scene and I thought it would help settle any nerves that Earl's actor might have had. In addition to that first scene, I also decided to shoot his parts last so that by the time we got to him he would be more comfortable with his lines. This strategy worked out well and I was very pleased with his performance.

The actor who played Doland exceeded my expectations with his performance. I was skeptical at first with some of his takes, though. I felt like he was being overly silly, but after reviewing the footage, I realized that these were his best takes. This experience

with Doland's actor has taught me to trust the instincts of my actors more. His silliness helped to bring the comedy back into the film.

I do not want to misrepresent the actor who played Marcus's performance. I felt that he did a great job overall, but there were more problems with his line deliveries than the other two characters. I hold myself responsible for that because I should have caught and corrected them at the time of production. For example when he delivers the line, "Good God y'all are crazy!" I should have had him pause between, "Good God" and "y'all are crazy." This would have played better in the scene.

Post-Production

Editing can be a very difficult process, especially if principal photography is not conducted with a clear vision of the final product. To help keep the final version of *The Gorilla* as true to how I had envisioned it as possible, I asked my editor to be on set with me. This decision was overall a positive experience. However, in retrospect, I feel I relied too much on him at times.

I decided to let my editor make a first pass at the edit without any real involvement from me. That process was just roughing out the story and picking the best shots to use. I wanted to give him some space and not be the kind of director who was constantly looking over the editor's shoulder. When I received the first cut I was really impressed by the performances of Doland and Earl, but I felt that Marcus's acting was a little lacking in some scenes. I wrote down my notes and scheduled a meeting with my editor to discuss them.

The first note I had was about the poker playing montage. As I have stated previously, I wanted the montage to be quick cuts, but my editor's version was slow and

low-energy. We talked about the love scene in *RocknRolla*, as well as the “tap water” scene in *The World’s End*. Both scenes have element that I envisioned for that particular montage and I wanted him to refer back to them.

The next note was the camera work in the opening scene as well as the man-cave reveal scene. In the opening scene, the jib was not moving back in straight, but would drift a little to the sides. It was a small drift, but noticeable enough to be obvious. In the man-cave reveal scene, the steadicam work was also a little unstable and drifted slightly to the left. My editor said that he could try to fix it using special effects software.

The following note was on the performance of Marcus, as previously mentioned. I felt that there were better takes of his performance and in some cases there were, but those take usually involved the actor looking directly into the camera after. My editor and I decided to cut around some of those as well as cut some of the lines, and overall, I believe it made for a tighter and better scene.

Another issue was the reveal of Earl at his front door. During principal photography, I wanted to frame the shot so that his head would be cut off a bit to make him look taller (see figure 6-1). Unfortunately, the effect did not work. The camera was not low enough to give Earl the large and intimidating look I was trying to achieve. In the end we decided to reshoot that wide shot with a more subject superior framing (see figure 6-2).

Figure 5.1. Original framing 2.

Figure 5.2. Reframed (subject superior) 2.

My last note was on the table flip scene that we could only do once. We were running the risk of breaking a poker table that did not belong to us and would have to be

returned to its owner. The one take that we shot was great, but of course we were not able to get any additional coverage because we could not reshoot, so we decided to shoot an additional insert shot of poker chips and beer bottles flying through the air. We also wanted to try to shoot it with a higher frame rate to create the slow motion effect. The slow motion shots were later added to the film and successfully added a more dramatic aesthetic. Overall it was a successful meeting and we accomplished a good amount.

During a follow-up session with my editor we reworked the montage so that it was more energetic. Unfortunately, the original idea to have quick cuts like the scenes in *RocknRolla* and *The World's End* did not work because of pacing. The scene would have been far too short, so I thought about the montage scene in the Guy Richie film *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998). The scene takes place in a bar where a group of friends are celebrating. The scene is cut like a music video. It speeds up and slows down the frame rates with quick cuts in order to make it a bit chaotic. I told my editor to watch that scene for inspiration, and I believe that the end result was more energetic and worked better with the film's pacing. Although I did not plan the scene this way, I am happy with the results and I feel that it keeps within overall look of the film.

After my editor sent me a second cut of the film I reviewed it with my thesis committee chair. We had both agreed on a few points with the edit that needed attention in order to make the film flow a little better. I contacted my editor and gave him the list of comments we had so he could work on them.

One area we discussed was occasional bad or inconsistent audio, which can be the most distracting thing in a film. There were a few lines of dialogue that seem to be coming from a different microphone. In addition to the dialogue issues, there were

scratching sounds on occasion when an actor's movement would cause the microphone to rub against his clothing. On one occasion, when the actor playing Earl is delivering a line, he is scratching himself like an ape, causing a bad microphone scratching/rubbing noise. But because this occurred during the delivery of dialogue, it would be very hard to clean up. There is no way to separate the dialogue from the scratching sound, so what we ended up doing was over-emphasizing the scratching noise with a cartoonish scratching sound. The result was very comedic and played with the absurdity of the film.

The rest of the comments dealt in tightening up a scene. Comedy is all about timing, and so setting the pace of the film is crucial. In the first poker-playing scene we hold on Earl's character just a little too long and he subtly breaks character. I asked my editor to cut before Earl breaks. In the end of the film, Marcus leaves Doland in the front yard, and too much time passes between Marcus leaving and Doland saying his line "Freak!" I also asked my editor to shorten that so it is not as long. In addition to shortening the scene, we reframed the last wide shot so that it looked like a medium shot. This was done to put more emphasis on the doghouse that Doland was crawling into. We were very fortunate to be able to digitally zoom that much into the shot without losing picture quality. This was due to the high quality sensor in the Arri Amira camera that we used for production of the film.

Lastly, there was a continuity error that needed to be addressed. In the scene just before Earl flips the table Marcus delivers the line "Good God y'all are crazy!" I have mentioned this line previously, and in order to make the scene flow better, he cut the line completely. This became problematic, because Earl then asks Marcus "What do you mean I'M crazy." We had cut out the line that made the subsequent line make sense. I

asked my editor to work the question back in so continuity would not be broken.

Unfortunately, we could not make it work so we cut out both Marcus and Earl's lines and instead put a shot of Earl smacking his head like a Gorilla, which worked much better.

In addition to the meeting with my thesis committee chair, I also reviewed the second cut of the film with another professor on my thesis committee. Most of the notes dealt with ways to tighten up the film, which is a term that means to cut out superfluous parts of shots in order to make the pacing of the film better. For example, in the first scene of the film, there is a shot of a car entering the right side of the frame and exiting the left. There were several seconds before the car actually entered the frame, so it was suggested that we cut out some of that time and have the shot start as the car entered frame.

Another example of this would be in the second scene where Doland tells Marcus that Earl has a trigger. Initially, Marcus does a double-take, but it felt a little deliberate, so we decided to shorten Marcus's reaction to a single shocking glance. We did this by cutting on the movement of the second glance so that it looked more natural.

The next topic that was discussed was sound and score. One way to make the audience feel a certain way is to cue them through music. For example, Earl gives a speech to Marcus about being number one in business. As the camera pushes into Earl to show the increased intensity of the scene, we also hear a low rumbling sound of violins. As the camera pushes close the sound gets louder, but unfortunately it was not enough. We ended up raising the overall volume of the violins and adding a series of drum booms that increase in volume like the violins. The combined sound was very intense, and ended very sharply on a shot of Marcus just staring at Earl dumbfounded.

The lack of music can also be distracting, which was the case for the last two scenes of my film, both of which had no music at all. In the second to the last scene, which takes place back in Marcus's car, we decided to put the same classical music that was in the first scene of the film. This created a nice bookends effect. The absence of score for the final scene was very distracting and the final joke did not land very well. My thesis committee member suggested I put an upbeat 1960's boogie song in the last scene in order to let the audience know that Doland being in a doghouse is funny. This was what we did and it completely changed the tone of the scene and make the joke much more comical.

The overall edit put the entire runtime at eight minutes and eight seconds. My goal was to have the final product between eight and fourteen minutes long. I have picked this range for a couple of different reasons. First, I feel that a short film over fourteen minutes can start to become taxing on an audience, because if the conflict is not resolved by then it can seem like the film is droning on. A short film under eight minutes generally does not have enough time to develop into a story. Second, festival programmers want to create a schedule that can show as many short films as possible in the allotted time block that they have. If the block is an hour long, a twenty-minute film will take a third of that block. That is not to say that it never happens, but programmers have to decide if the film is entertaining enough to sacrifice time that could be allotted to two short films instead. Festival programmer would also find it very hard to put a film in that was too short because it could be an odd fit in the time block.

Color

After I had a picture-lock on *The Gorilla*, I scheduled a meeting with my director of photography. In addition to shooting the film, he was also my colorist. We had previously discussed the look of the film, and for the most part he had lit it accordingly, but the overall film needed to have a slight increase in color saturation. This will help to make some of the colors brighter, as well as make the skin-tones a little warmer. In addition to saturation, there were a couple of issues that needed to be resolved. To achieve this look, my colorist has applied a look-up table (LUT) that has a specific set up parameters to that lock elements such as colors and saturation to the desired settings.

The first issue had to do with color temperature. All of the interior scenes were shot with a color temperature of 3200 degrees Kelvin (K). Unfortunately, the slow motion shots were shot with a color temperature of 5600K. The reason that this happened was because the lights that we used for these shots only had bulbs that were rated for that particular color temperature. This created a bluer look that did not match the rest of the shots for that scene, but because they were the only lights we had, we adapted the situation. What we ending up deciding, was that we would shoot the scenes in 5600K and then change it to 3200K in post-production. This was actually a simple fix using color-correcting software, resulting in a consistent color temperature throughout the scene

The second issue also deals with color temperature. In the second scene when Marcus and Doland are at the front door Doland appears to be lit with a warm golden color while Marcus is lit with a bluer tint. Unlike the slow motion shots, these were shot with lighting instruments that had two different color temperatures. Doland's golden

glow is coming from the front porch light that had a 3200K bulb in it. Marcus was lit using two 1200-watt Hydrargyrum medium-arc iodide (HMI) lights, which have a color temperature of 5600K. These lights were used to simulate moonlight. I had to choose which character I wanted my colorist to match the color temperature to, so I picked Doland, because I liked the warmer look of the shot, and I felt that Marcus's shot seemed a bit cold.

The last color correction issue that I had was in the last two scenes of the film. The shots of Doland's face were a little dark, and needed to be brightened. (See figure 6-3).

Figure 5.3. Original shot 2.

Figure 5.4. Color correction 2.

To adjust for these darker shots, my colorist used specialized software to lift the brighter parts of the shot to a neutral and usable level. He then shifted the colors back to a neutral level and finished the shot with the LUT that was used throughout the film

After all the edits and coloring were done, I needed to see if the satire I made, and argued to its logical absurdity, was actually funny. I believe I achieved this feat, which I discussed in chapter one, in a few key ways.

The first way I successfully achieved creating a funny film was by insuring that most of the script's integrity was maintained. I say most, only because of the small pieces of the script that were edited out due to extenuating circumstances. The loss of these pieces however, did not affect the overall satirical message of deconstructing the alpha male culture. I also feel that the film successfully argued the absurd point of unchecked male aggression leading men to become feral animals.

Second, I felt that the actors truly represented the roles that they were playing. There is seriousness to comedy that needs to be maintained by the actors in order to sell it to an audience. For example, the intensity and rigid behavior of Earl's performance not only showed that he seriously thought he was a gorilla, but it also allowed Doland's character to be silly when reacting to Earl. Marcus's timid behavior that is reflected in the film makes it that much funnier when he finds the strength to stand up to Earl.

The last reason is the editing. Careful consideration and review was taken to make sure that the pacing of the film allowed for comedic timing. The difference of just a few extra frames of a shot can decide whether or not a joke will land. An example of this from my film would be after Earl gives his speech to Marcus about being number one. The script only states "Marcus stares blankly," so through editing we were able to create a humorous moment by intensifying the music and then cutting it to an anticlimactic stare from Marcus, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Conclusion

The Gorilla is my second short film, and as I worked on making it as successful as I can, I have learned where my limitations lie. It is clear to me that my strengths are in the details of a production. I thrive on solving problems on and off set, which can ultimately be a liability when you are trying to direct. I told myself that I wanted take so much ownership of this film because I knew I would be the only one that cared enough to see it through, but in retrospect, I should have put a little more trust in the people around me. If I had done that, I might have trusted myself more. This may seem a bit melancholy, but really, it is enlightening. I made mistakes and learned from them, but what I gained from those mistakes the most was perspective on how I can be a better

filmmaker, and where I might better fit in the industry. I want to continue to direct films, but I know that my passions keep leading me towards producing and set management. During my shoots, the urge to take charge of the set got in the way of my directing. Again, I do not see this as a vice, but a sign of what I would be happy doing.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

The Gorilla Screenplay

The Gorilla

by

Aaron Neil Carter and Daniel Lee Beard

INT. CAR. MAGIC HOUR.

On a black screen, we hear the SLAMMING of two car doors.

We're looking through the windshield of a small car out onto a DE-FOCUSED street ahead. PULLING BACK, reveal two men sitting perfectly still in the front seats, their heads fixed forward.

The passenger, DOLAND, wears dogtags. MARCUS sits in the passenger seat.

They sit for FIVE SECONDS.

SUDDENLY:

MARCUS
LOOK at this!

Doland jumps in surprise.

DOLAND
Ah!

MARCUS
I got a book.

Marcus holds a book out toward Doland, showing us the cover. "How to Poker."

MARCUS (CONT'D)
It has some good tricks. Hopefully
I can keep up.

Marcus puts away his book.

DOLAND
You don't have to keep up to have
a good time, Marcus.

MARCUS
I'll try. It's just, you know, I'm
new here. I just don't want to
look stupid in front of the boss.

DOLAND
Earl is a great guy. I know he can
be kind of tough at work. I mean
he has to be kind of the alpha.
That's his job.

MARCUS
I know.

DOLAND
I had a bad week a while back so
he took me out to dinner, paid for
everything. We had a great time.

MARCUS
Really?

DOLAND
There's almost nothing to dislike
about him.

A beat. Marcus looks at Doland inquisitively.

MARCUS
What do you mean almost nothing?

DOLAND
Let's go!

QUICK CUTS:

- A seat belt being fastened.
- Another seat belt being fastened.
- Marcus spins his key ring.
- Marcus JAMS the keys into the ignition with great force.
We zoom quickly on this.

THEN

We are in the back seat again, but despite the excitement
of the ignition sequence, the car CRAWLS, and the two men
face forward again. Doland turns to Marcus.

DOLAND (CONT'D)
Can't you go any faster?

MARCUS
No.

DOLAND
Okay.

QUICK CUTS:

- Seatbelt being released.
- Second seatbelt being released.
- Marcus removes his keys from the ignition.
- Marcus spins his key ring.

- Marcus puts the key ring in his pocket.

EXT. EARL'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

DOLLY SHOT: Pushing toward the front door. Doland and Marcus walk past the camera and knock on the door.

MARCUS
Doland, wait. What did you mean earlier when you said that Earl has 'almost nothing wrong with him?'

Doland hesitates.

DOLAND
He has a trigger.

MARCUS
He has a trigger?

DOLAND
Just don't mention zoos, primates, silverbacks or anything like that.

MARCUS
(confused)
Okay.

DOLAND
It's really no big deal. He's such a good guy. But now and then something just...comes out...

Marcus stares.

DOLAND (CONT'D)
I shouldn't have said anything.

MARCUS
No, no. I'm sorry. I'll try not to say anything about jungles. And besides, the guy is my boss. I want to impress him. Thanks for telling me.

DOLAND
Yeah sure, it'll be totally fine as long as you're careful. Otherwise he'll act like a gorilla.

MARCUS
What?

The door swings open and we find ourselves looking up at a EARL, a huge man in his late 30's, dressed like a bro and wearing a silver shirt, SMILING warmly.

CAMERA INFERIOR: He towers over the diminutive pair.

EARL
Evening, ladies.

Earl shakes hands vigorously with the two.

DOLAND
Hey, Earl. How's it going?

MARCUS
(gulps, nods, voice
cracks)
Hi.

INT. GAME ROOM. NIGHT.

Earl ushers Marcus and Doland into the man-cave.

EARL
Well, what do you think? It's a
pretty good nest, right?

Marcus darts his eyes all over the room.

A poster for the Jungle book.

A poster for King Kong.

A computer with a gorilla-themed screensaver.

Marcus gulps. Earl slaps Doland and Marcus' shoulders.

EARL (CONT'D)
Let's play!

THEN

QUICK CUTS:

- Poker chips are shaken dramatically and set on a card table.
- Cards being shuffled.
- CRACK. SLOW MO: a foaming beer being opened.
- A lighter clicks twice.

- A cigar being lit.
- Earl draws at his cigar. CLOSE UP: Tobacco glowing red.
- The cards are dealt.
- Chips get pushed all over the table.
- DOLLY ALONG a line of beer bottles. When we reach the end of the line, someone adds another.
- CLOSE UP: Marcus puts out his cigar in the ashtray.

Earl SITS DOWN at a card table, ending the montage. Then he watches Marcus put out his cigar. Marcus looks disgusted.

EARL
 Marcus, you haven't even singed
 that thing.

MARCUS
 I know.

Marcus sniffs the cigar with a sour expression.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
 Cigars are tough on me.

Doland deals.

EARL
 Well they're not for everyone.

Earl leans forward and looks at his cards.

EARL (CONT'D)
 (extending his lips like
 a gorilla)
 OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Marcus looks at Doland. Doland widens his eyes, stares at the table.

MARCUS
 Uh, good hand, Earl?

EARL
 So good I'm going to give you both
 a raise.

Earl tosses a chip into the pot, leaning back in his chair, laughing to himself prodigiously, his cigar clenched between his teeth.

EARL (CONT'D)
Just kidding.

Earl renews his laughter. Marcus looks up at Earl. The cigar has turned into a BANANA.

Marcus shakes himself out of it and takes off his glasses.

EARL (CONT'D)
Look, Marcus. I'm going to give you a piece of advice. If you want to do more than just survive in this company, you have got to be an alpha.

MARCUS
An alpha?

EARL
You know what that means?

MARCUS
I think so.

EARL
It means you get mad. Play hard. Think about it. To be number one, you have to BE number one.

Marcus stares blankly.

DOLAND
So Earl, tell us about your new function at work.

EARL
Well, I'm basically what another company might call a branch manager. I get together with the inner band at corporate once a month to report progress, address problems, and groom new blood.

Doland smiles widely and leans forward

DOLAND
What do you use? Brushes?

Marcus laughs, but Earl doesn't recognize this as a joke.

EARL
Of course we don't use brushes.

Doland looks disappointed.

DOLAND

Oh.

Marcus stares at Doland.

EARL

Anyway, it can be a mess
sometimes. My prime mates--

Marcus chokes on his beer. Doland pats his back.

EARL (CONT'D)

...sometimes give me the run
around, send me up to Dallas for
meaningless tasks. And I hate that
place. Just a regular
concrete...uh...concrete...

MARCUS

Jungle.

Doland gulps. Earl glares at Marcus, his mind turning.

EARL

That's right...

Earl looks away, deep in thought. He scratches his armpit.

EARL (CONT'D)

(to himself)
Sometimes we all give in to the
law of the jungle...

MARCUS

I fold. I'm getting another beer.

EARL

I'll come with you!

The two leave Doland at the table.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Marcus goes through the fridge. Earl stands to the side,
smiling at him awkwardly.

MARCUS

Can I uh, get you something?

EARL

Get me one of those stouts.

Marcus hands Earl a stout. Earl looks at it, grinning.

EARL (CONT'D)

This is a fine beer. Isn't it a fine beer?

Marcus takes another out of the fridge.

MARCUS

It's okay I guess.

Earl suddenly steps very close to Marcus, towering over him and breathing heavily.

EARL

Marcus, I need you to know something private. I'm concerned about Doland.

MARCUS

Doland? Why?

EARL

Well...he's a great guy. You know, a great guy. But there's just one little thing.

MARCUS

What?

EARL

He has a trigger.

MARCUS

Oh God.

EARL

He might start acting like a dachshund at any moment and I wanted you to be aware.

Marcus looks over at Doland in the other room. Doland scratches his neck feverishly.

EARL (CONT'D)

I don't know why, but it's just a thing he does. So don't mention pounds, collars, barking, or fleas. Or anything like that.

MARCUS

Alright.

EARL

I knew I could count on you. Now, let's quit monkeying around and go play some cards.

Earl stomps off. Marcus reconsiders his whole life for a moment, then follows.

INT. GAME ROOM. NIGHT.

Marcus is back. He sits down.

DOLAND
I fold.

EARL
Are you nuts?

DOLAND
Oh yeah. Barking mad.

Doland starts barking like a dog, then laughs. This comes across in a very sinister manner. Earl gives Marcus a "told you so" look and pulls all the chips to his own pile.

EARL
Alright, who's dealing next?

MARCUS
I'm not sure I'm going to do another, Earl. I'm feeling a little uh, out of my league.

EARL
Oh come on, don't wuss out on me now. Doland?

DOLAND
What's the matter, Marcus?

Earl drops some cash on the table.

EARL
Well let's make it interesting.

Doland and Marcus look at each other apprehensively. Doland relents.

DOLAND
You know, actually, it's getting late and I'm so, so tired. Dog tired.

Doland laughs at himself. Earl glares at Marcus.

DOLAND (CONT'D)
What?

MARCUS
It is getting pretty late.

EARL
One more hand.

MARCUS
No.

EARL
Aw come on.

MARCUS
I'm good. Quit egging me on.

EARL
Please.

MARCUS
No, no, no...

EARL
Play!

MARCUS
Earl, you're driving me bana--!

Earl freezes. Doland stares at Marcus. Marcus gulps.

EARL
Driving you what, Marcus?

Marcus shakes his head.

MARCUS
Uh. Bonkers.

A long beat.

EARL
Huh. I thought you were going to
say something else.
(pause)
You know they have an ape down at
the zoo named Bonkers.

Earl taps his chest.

EARL (CONT'D)
Doesn't belong in there of course.
Captured against his will,
kenned like a cur.

Doland cocks his head.

DOLAND
I find the term cur to be highly
offensive and primal.

Earl twitches.

EARL
Primal?!

Earl jumps up ferociously. Doland jumps up, too, snarls.

MARCUS
Whoah now, everyone calm down!

EARL
I am calm!

DOLAND
Marcus, stay out of this.

EARL
Hey. Leave Marcus out of it.

Earl and Doland growl at one another.

MARCUS
Come on guys, let's just have
another beer and call it a night.

The two stop growling.

DOLAND
What about the game?

MARCUS
It's late.

Earl growls.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Good God you are crazy.

Marcus gets up and heads for the door.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I'm getting out of here.

DOLAND
Oh, boy! Can I come? I love car
rides!

EARL
Where are you going?! What do you
mean I'm crazy?!

MARCUS
We're leaving, Earl. You're
clearly going through some stuff
right now. We get it. Everyone has
a breaking point.

EARL
NOTHING IS WRONG!

Earl roars and FLIPS the table. He beats his chest,
roaring.

MARCUS
Time to go.

Doland and Marcus tear out of the room as Earl starts to
tear around the floor, walking on his knuckles. Marcus
stumbles off after Doland in a panic.

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

QUICK CUTS:

- A seat belt being fastened.
- Another seat belt being fastened.
- Marcus spins his key ring.
- Marcus misses a few times, then JAMS the keys into the
ignition with great force. We zoom quickly on this.

THEN

The car stops. We are in the back seat again. The two men
face forward again.

MARCUS
Where do you live?

DOLAND
Just right there. I'm sorry about
tonight, Marcus. I don't know why
Earl got so touchy all of a
sudden.

MARCUS
Yeah, what a freak, huh?

DOLAND
I knew he thought he was a
gorilla, but I didn't think he was
a violent gorilla.

EXT. SUBURBS. NIGHT.

Doland gets out of the car and starts off toward a house.
He stops, turns.

DOLAND
You know, I feel bad. Do you want
to come in for a nightcap?

MARCUS
Yeah, sure.

Marcus gets out, follows Doland up the walk. Doland veers
off course and heads for a doghouse. Marcus turns back.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Nope. Nope, nope, nope
(nope, nope, nope)

DOLAND
(over)
What? What?!

Marcus gets in his car and guns it.

DOLAND (CONT'D)
Freak.

Doland crawls into the doghouse.

THE END

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