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Projections of Caesar 2012.

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Projections of Caesar 2012

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By

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[Note: Signature of mentor **is required**; listing and signatures of faculty readers are suggested, since they like to be included, but optional at the discretion of the student]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRELUDE:

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears, and more importantly lend me your eyes. Since it was first performed in 1599 the Shakespearian play *Julius Caesar* has been adapted into thousands of different forms, from traditional Victorian to period Greek to aliens fighting it out for power on mars. However, this past fall ETSU chose to bring the play into the modern era with an adaptation called *Julius Caesar 2012*. The play, adapted and directed by Herb Parker, centers around political concepts creating an interesting parallel between the political unrest and subterfuge of Shakespeare's original tragedy and the politics of the modern era. For this show I was assigned the role of Assistant Projections designer. It was my job to take everything I had learned in regards to both my digital media and theatre education, and use them to create digital pieces that would enhance the overall quality of the show.

PRESHOW:

We began work on the show in mid-September of 2012. After a period of research on the play in which the script was read, notes were taken, and outlines were made it was time for my first meeting with the director and the other designers. The most prominent member of the crew was the director, Herb Parker, and at his right hand was the stage manager William McCall. Other designers for the show included costume designer Christine Waxstein, lighting designer Melissa Shafer, set designer Delbert Hall, and the head projections designer Marty Fitzgerald, under whom I would be working for the duration of the production.

The first official meeting began smoothly. Scenic design was discussed, the costumes were talked about, and we discussed how to get different effects that were written about in the script onstage. A couple minutes into the meeting the director turned to us, the projection designers. Though I had expected some epic challenge, his instructions were simple. Create some

slides here, Photoshop something there, make a video of this, and everything would be fun! There would still be a lot of hard work, but compared to the high definition video effects I had been dreading these visual compositions would be a breeze.

ACT 1 SCENE 1 PART 1: ASSASSINS AND ASSASSINATED

The beginning of the performance: Caesar stands nobly onstage, strong and powerful. Antony arrives and offers him the crown three times and each time Caesar denies it. A traditional yet profound scene derived from the brilliance of our esteemed adapter and director as a bit of foreshadowing for things to come later in the play. For this "dumb show," as the director called it, Herb wanted me to create a video montage of famous assassins and their victims throughout history from Jesus and Judas all the way through Martin Luther King Jr. and James Earl Ray. My first step in the process was to research everyone that was on Herb's list. I had a general knowledge of most of the assassinated from various history classes, but I knew next to nothing about the details of the assassins. Since none of my sources had to be sited I went straight to the most outlawed site in all of academia: Wikipedia. From there I got all the information I needed which was predominately names, dates, and details of the assassinations.

After getting the information, I then had to find pictures for every pair. Upon recommendation from the Head Projections Designer, Marty, I kept all of my searches extremely broad, taking samples of a little bit of everything so that before I put anything together I could present everything to the director. When I brought the results of my photo search to the director, he specified that shots of each person from the chest up were most desired.

As I was going through my second round of searches, I was notified by Marty that I should be completely aware of copyright laws. If I used any of the straight Google search pictures I had found so far I put the play at risk for copyright violations. This was an obstacle

that I had never encountered before. I needed to make sure every photo and resource I found was common source, but I had no idea how to tell if it was or not. Luckily when the subject was brought up in a production meeting Christine opened me up to a website search engine called creativecommons.org that helped me find common source resources. After going through the site I managed to find all the photos of the assassins and assassinated that I needed. I showed them to Herb and he approved.

For awhile things were set for this part of the scene. However, during tech rehearsal, after seeing them on stage, another task arose. Though the pictures of the individuals were nice, the director felt that some pictures of the assassinations themselves would really help set the mood. Finding common source images that matched that description, however, would prove to be a problem. Some, like the Last Supper, were easy to find, but others, such as a photo of the Martin Luther King Jr. Assassination, proved impossible. After some digging around among the common source photos I managed to find old pictures that matched everyone except the assassinations of Gandhi and King. For King, however, I did manage to find a picture of the hotel where he was assassinated, which the director liked just fine.

After all the images for the assassins montage had been compiled and approved by the director it was time to put them together. Early on in the meeting process we had numerous discussions figuring out exactly how we were going to do the projections. After a collaboration between the set designer and the director, it was decided that there would be four television monitors set up on stage, two oriented horizontally and two vertically. It was also decided that in order to get four different images on each of these screens four PowerPoint Presentations would be created, each assigned to a different screen. While the PowerPoints did not affect the creation of the images, the orientation of the screens did. In Premiere, the video editing program we used

to edit everything together, all images are automatically put in a horizontal orientation. In order to accommodate for the vertical screens we had to carefully stretch and rotate the various images to fit onto the screens vertically which required us to basically put things together with our heads tilted to the side. It wasn't too difficult, but sometimes it did prove to be very frustrating.

ACT 1 SCENE 1 PART 2: PLEBEIAN ON THE STREET

After the "dumb show" depicting the presentation of the crown and the video montage of assassins the scene shifts to a talk show called *Plebeian on the Street* presented by two Roman citizens named Marulus and Flavius who are interviewing locals to find out their opinions and thoughts on the current political situation of Rome. At first the director wanted us to have a live video feed displayed on all screens. We discussed the possibility of hooking it up via a cell phone connected to one of the monitors, but such a transmission process would require calling in experts from the Radio, Television, and Film division, and it would have taken a good chunk out of our budget, so it was put aside. Next we considered the possibility of having a camera and a cable connected to one of the monitors, but that would still be complex, expensive, and overall not worth the effort. Thus it was decided that instead of any type of video feed we would have placards, still images displaying the title of the show, displayed across all the screens instead.

Designing the placards was my first chance to create something from scratch. When I first asked about the details the director wanted in the placards he said all it really needed was the title of the show. I asked what kind of feel he wanted, and he told me to look at some of the logos from news programs like FOX or NBC, which I took literally. I searched images of the FOX news logo, and decided to do the placard similar to that, only with Roman elements to make it seem more in the world of the play. In the back of the FOX logo there are three beams of light, so in the Plebeian placard I created three symbols of traditional ionic columns instead. I looked

around in the fonts section until I found a font that looked similar to the one on the FOX logo, and then all I had to do was finish adding in the background, for which I chose the traditional FOX red, white, and blue. The main design for this version was now complete, though later, upon specification from the director, I would have to add the words "With Marulus and Flavius."

Plebeian Design 1

At our next meeting I was able to present this design to the director; however he wasn't too keen on it. Instead of taking inspiration from news programs like FOX and CBS he thought that taking inspiration from various talk shows would better help me to get the general feel of what he wanted the placards to do. He showed me a graphic of a man with a megaphone and explained that he wanted the words "Plebeian on the Street" to be coming out of the megaphone, which was a fairly simple task. I took the graphic into Photoshop, put it on a plain white background, recycled the color and font from the first design to make the text, and viola! It was done. Unfortunately, it looked a little on the bland side to me, a sentiment which I had a feeling the director would share, thus I moved on to more research.

Plebeian Design 2

While researching talk show placards I found several interesting ones that I thought had a unique feel to them. I came across one from The *Bonnie Hunt Show* which had a very unique seventies style feel to it. It had the title of the show in pale blue boxes, occasionally combined with a series of horizontal lines in various colors. Using this design as inspiration I created my own version. I wrote out the title of the show, each section of the title getting its own box, and in each box I used a different shade of blue background. For the text I decided to interlink the boxes by making the shade of the font the same color as the background from one of the other boxes. I arranged them all in the middle, and then added a slight skew to the angles which composed the boxes to make them more dynamic. For the general I chose to use a series of horizontal lines in a predominately analogous color scheme consisting of various shades of red, yellow, orange, brown, and pink. I was quite pleased with how it turned out, however the director didn't feel it was quite what we wanted so I went back to the drawing board for version number four.

Plebeian Design 3

At the same time I had found the design for the *Bonnie Hunt Show*, I had also found a strange placard for a radio talk show which had an old style microphone in it with some funky colors. I really liked the overall look-and-feel of the microphone so I found an image of one and cut it out of the original picture in Photoshop so I could use it. I chose to recycle the font style from my first placard, only this time I changed it all blue. I wanted the microphone, and the placard overall, to have lots of personality. Since I was feeling incredibly attracted to the funky colors at the time I decided to have a series of green rays spreading out from the microphone. I positioned the microphone in a lower corner, and the text in the middle of the placard. That way at first the eye would be drawn to the microphone, but then the eye would follow the rays upwards toward the actual title of the show thus giving the overall piece more movement. The green rays alone, however, were boring so I chose to create an orange gradation background behind it to give the piece more pop and flair, much like a real talk show of the style that was presented in the script. When I showed the design to the director he expressed his approval.

Plebeian Design 4

The placard, my forth design, was set to be the one to fill the horizontal screens during the talk show, however we still needed something for the vertical screens. The idea for those came late one night when Herb, Marty, and I were at the ETSU Digital Media Center shooting footage of the actors for a video that Marty was putting together for another scene in the show. Herb thought it would be great if we had the names of our hosts standing proudly on those vertical screens in a design that matched the horizontal placards. While Marty filmed I was busy on Photoshop putting these together, and this time I had the benefit of having the director himself beside me the entire time. We went through a couple of different concepts, even at one point considering having the signs for male and female on each individual placard so the audience could identify which name belonged to which of the male and female hosts, though that design was quickly dismissed after it was tested. Eventually we decided that just having a similar microphone design to the horizontal designs on the placards with the names in vertical text would be sufficient. The designs were composed, the director was satisfied, and all three designs were set to be in the show. I was very happy with them, and even though they were later cut in favor of a more complex and aesthetically pleasing design created by Marty, I still viewed them

as an achievement.

Plebeian Vertical Placards

ACT 1 SCENE 3: LOOK TO THE SKYLINE!

Scene 3: Cassius, who in this version of the play is now a female politician, and Brutus are meeting in their hotel room, having a romantic moment together until Brutus hears the people cheering for Caesar outside. For this scene the director wanted pictures of night skylines. The idea was to make it feel like the audience was looking in on a penthouse and the monitors were windows looking out over the city. At first I searched for specifically Roman skylines: Pictures of Rome at night, the Coliseum, the Forum, anything I could find that made it feel like the real world Rome. This, however, proved to be a mistake. After showing my images to the director he informed me that he wanted more contemporary skylines, like those one sees when looking at New York at night, with skyscrapers lit up like Christmas trees. At first I was a bit confused by this since there wasn't anything like that in Rome, however he explained to me that the Rome of this world wasn't really Rome, but more like an alternate universe version of Rome where everything was sort of blended with aspects of American life. With this in mind I set out on my hunt again, managing to find skylines from New York, China, Singapore, and more. The director picked out which ones he liked, and they were installed into the slide show with ease. Much

simpler than the things I had had to do before.

*Night Skyline*

ACT 1 SCENE 4: DOWNTOWN BAR

The plotting of Brutus, Cassius, and their band of conspirators has angered the Heavens. They have all committed themselves to murdering Caesar, and as a result the very Earth and skies seem to show their disapproval as lightening flashes menacingly above! Dread has fallen upon the city. Though it unnerves some of the conspirators they still intend to make good on their plans. In this scene the conspirators are meeting at a bar and the director requested two things: menacing pictures of a stormy or paranormal looking sky and a simple neon bar sign to show where they were.

The bar sign was easy. I gathered numerous pictures of bar signs and bar interiors to show Herb so I could get a general idea of what he wanted and afterword he pointed out the ones he liked best. Using those as a guide, I found a sign that pleased him. The sign was simple, but its predominately black background would make it easy to change its orientation to whatever direction was needed to fit the TV screens without too much work.

Bar Sign

Next up was finding paranormal looking pictures of skies. My first thought? Lightening!

Clouds filled with electricity glowing fiercely in the sky! Fortunately, pictures like these are very

popular to post on the internet, thus they were fairly easy to find. I even managed to find pictures

of lightning arcing from the clouds to the ground, which, once edited, made great additions to the

vertical screens. After some quick editing to make everything fit and with the approval from the

director, the storm pictures were finished and scene 4 was good to go!
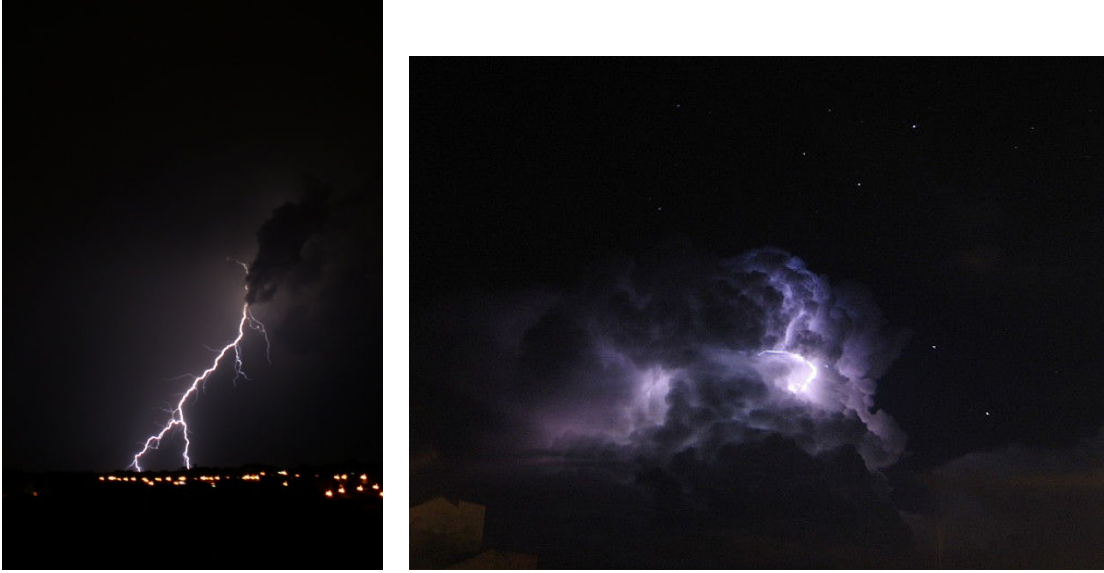
Menacing Skies 1 and 2

ACT 1 SCENE 5: HOUSE OF BRUTUS

Scene five: The conspirators meet at Brutus's house to plot the details of the assassination to take place the next day. For this scene the director wanted me to create a suggestion of Brutus's house, preferably something along the lines of a Washington D.C. style townhouse. I wanted to first get a main exterior shot then maybe a couple of details, like a doorknocker, the steps, or some such thing. Though I personally had no idea what such a townhouse would look like, I eventually managed to find several things that fit the description, which I saved and prepared for the next day's meeting. When I showed them to the director he found one he really liked.

There was an issue however: The picture of the townhouse was shot during the day, and the scene in the play takes place at night. For many this might mean looking for a new photo, but for a Digital Media minor this just meant another trip to Photoshop! The "day to night" effect is a fun little trick that can be done in a wide variety of ways. The first thing I did was play with the brightness levels. The picture had a high brightness value, so I went into Brightness and Contrast and brought it down a couple notches. Next, I increased the contrast so that the darks became darker, and the overall picture seemed a little more dynamic. In order to really give it the nighttime look I added a dark blue filter over the photo, using the multiply option so that it

blended smoothly over the picture. This worked extremely well for most of the picture, but the sky in the picture was still far too bright to represent a night sky. I couldn't keep darkening the entire picture lest it become so dark than none of the details were visible, so I had to go in manually and carefully apply the filter on every inch of sky I could see, making sure not to miss any and thus make it seem awkward and unprofessional. I showed it to the director, got a much appreciated compliment on it from Marty, and filed it away on our Digital Media Center server for safe keeping.
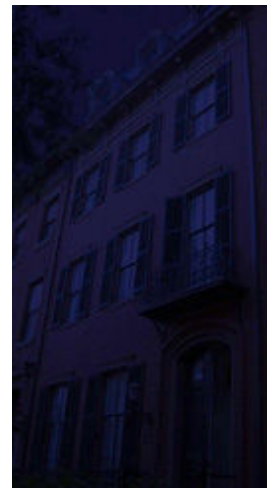
Brutus's House: Original (Left) and Altered (Right)

ACT 1, SCENE 6: PALACE OF CAESAR

The last time Caesar shall ever see his home, his family, or his wife: Scene Six. His wife tries to warn him not to go forth, telling him of a prophetic dream she had, and for a moment she convinces him. However, the conspirators soon arrive, and using the weapon of words they twist the dream until it becomes a positive omen instead of an evil portent. Like the previous scene, the director wanted a picture of the house, only this time he wanted a mansion befitting of the great Caesar himself. In keeping with the Roman motif I thought something white with columns or marble would be appropriate. I found a mansion that matched this description, which the

director loved, however I wanted something else. I had been toying around with the idea of adding something that symbolized Brutus and Caesar onto the detail shots of each of their houses. I had found an eagle doorknocker for Brutus's house, which I thought would fit him since later in the play his group's symbol becomes the eagle, however the director was not a fan of that particular piece. For Caesar I had decided that his symbol should be the wolf. In legend the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were found as babies by a wolf that nursed and raised them. This wolf is famous as a symbol of the Roman Empire, and since Caesar has great respect for tradition and heritage, as well as a sense of patriotism for his country, I thought this image would suit him extremely well. I searched for images of the wolf, and was very fortunate to find a statue of the wolf suckling the founders that looked like it could literally be right smack dab in the middle of the mansion's yard. The two pictures looked almost to belong together, and the director was very pleased with them.

Left: Caesar's House, Right: Roman Wolf Statue

ACT 1, SCENE 8, PART 1: POMPEY'S STATUE

The Roman Capitol. In the play Caesar, the press, and all the conspirators meet in front of the statue of the great Roman hero Pompey. For the first part of the scene the projections were simple. Find some pictures of the statue of Pompey and some pictures of Pompey's bust. Thanks to Wikipedia commons the entire process only took a couple minutes. The director approved the photos and it was done. Nothing big, however what was to come next was both a climax in the play and in the projections.
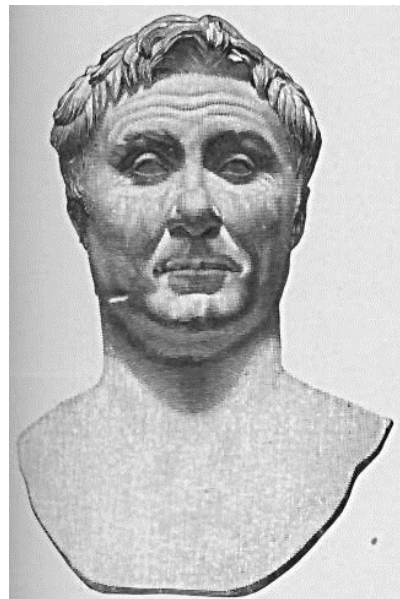
Left: Pompey's Statue, Right: Pompey's Bust

ACT 1, SCENE 8, PART 2: THE MURDER

"*CASCA first, then the other Conspirators stab CAESAR. BRUTUS hugs, then cradles CAESAR as if to soothe his wounds. Then stabs him.*"

In this climactic scene, Caesar is betrayed by those closest to him. The murder is dramatic. The fight choreographer created an intricate ballet of self-defense, murder, and blood-lust, the

lighting designer painted the entire stage blood red with her instruments, and we, the projection designers, were assigned to create a video sequence representative of the actions and emotions being displayed onstage. For this Marty took point, though I was privileged to be able to assist. We met the actors over at the Digital Media Center, and had some of them take the prop daggers that they use to stab Caesar and make stabbing motions, which we filmed. Next we had them slowly move the knife side to side so we could capture the effect of the light glinting off the blade, which we used later. That part of the shoot only took a few minutes, however my favorite part, and the part I was the most active participant in, was yet to come.

One of the things that Herb requested was images of bloody hand prints. We could have made them in Photoshop or simply found images, but Marty got the brilliant idea that we could make our own. So one day I went over to the Digital Media Center to meet Marty to make the hand prints. I had no idea what he had in mind, but when I got there he brought out a plate and two large containers of spoiled half-and-half cream. I was a bit confused until he explained that we were going to dip our hands into the cream and then smash them against the black digital media center walls to make the hand prints. The white of the cream would stand out in stark contrast against the black background, and then we could take the images into After Effects to make the cream look like blood.

While Marty manned the camera I slathered my hands in the horrible smelling cream. On his cue I smashed my hands against the wall, making the ghastly hand prints, and then, to add to the effect, Marty had me flick even more cream across the prints to make it look like blood was actually splattering against the surface. I watched the cream ooze and drip down the wall, imagining what it would look like when dyed that ghastly shade of blood red. We went through this process numerous times, getting footage and making sure everything was exactly the way we

wanted it. In addition to just flinging stuff on the wall, we also experimented with using plastic panes, seeing if we could make it look like the blood was splattering on the camera lens, but unfortunately that effect didn't pan out. After about an hour of both of us playing in spoiled dairy product our hands smelled like horror and death, but it was all worth it for the effects we were going to get.

ACT 2 SCENE 1: ANGRY MOB

Caesar has died, and now Brutus must answer for it. The crowds are upon him, demanding an explanation. In this scene Marty once again created one of his brilliant video compositions, and I got to help, if only in a small way. After consulting with the director Marty brought all the actors over to the Digital Media Center and filmed them in angry mob formations, screaming at the camera. My job was to monitor to make sure everything stayed in frame. Not much on my part, but as saying goes "There are no small parts, only small projection designers."

ACT 2 SCENE 2: BACK TO THE BAR

The war has begun: Brutus and Cassius, the leaders of the assassins who killed Caesar, versus Mark Antony and Octavious, who have come to avenge Caesar and punish those responsible. In this state of political unrest much of Rome has descended into chaos. During this scene the citizens attack a waitress from the bar in Act 1 Scene 4 simply because she shares the same name as one of the conspirators. The scene itself is gruesome, filled with brutal fight choreography. To portray this state of chaos the director had me look up pictures of graffiti covered walls, giving the feeling that the city has been vandalized. I located numerous pictures and the director chose those he most liked, however when he actually saw them on the monitors he felt that some of the images that I had found appeared too clean, more like works of art than full on vandalism. Both I and Marty took this into consideration, and both found more images

out of which the director made his final selections.

Graffiti 1 and 2

ACT 2, SCENE 4: FINE DINING

Antony and Octavious are meeting at an upscale restaurant to decide exactly who should die once their political conquest begins. The director had me locate images from a variety of extremely fancy restaurants to give the overall feel of the environment. Remembering Marty's advice to always start with a wide selection, I got numerous images from a wide array of upscale restaurants, from classic chic to more modernistic. After the director showed me which direction he was leaning I found more images, and the director's final picture choices were made.

Fancy Restaurant Photos 1 and 2

ACT 2, SCENE 5: CAMPAIGNING

Politics: My least favorite subject in the entire world. Yet, this modern adaptation of

Julius Caesar, which interestingly enough premiered around election time, is filled with politics galore. In this scene Brutus and Cassius are attending a fundraiser at their political headquarters. The director wanted me to find interior and exterior shots that would make the stage look as such. I had never seen what a campaign headquarters looked like, so I started with a little research. I found images of big glass covered buildings, which I thought fit nicely. However I had to be extra careful to avoid any shot that had the logo of any organization. It wouldn't do any good to have a picture that was supposed to represent Brutus and Cassius's headquarters if it said "Hillary 2008" on it. For the building interior I found some shots of office cubicles which I thought would fit, however the director thought it would be much more effective if we had some campaign posters instead. I will talk about those in Act 2 Scene 6 Part 2.


Brutus/Cassius Headquarters Exteriors 1 and 2

ACT 2, SCENE 6, PART 1: PAPPARAZZI

In the beginning of this scene a massive political debate occurs between Brutus and Antony. They enter onto the stage to the sound of reporters shouting, citizens asking questions, and cameras flashing. For this I was asked to put together a montage of images evoking a media circus. I decided to focus on two kinds of images: Cameras and Microphones. I looked up photos of numerous types and style of these media devices, and then used Photoshop to cut the image out of whatever background they were attached to.

Next, I had to think what I really wanted these montages to be. From the phrase "media circus" that Herb used, I got the feeling he wanted something with an invasive feel such as when a swarm of paparazzi is pressing in on someone. I decided to have each photo in the montages have an increasing number of devices, and the devices themselves continually increase in size so it looked like more and more of them were appearing, multiplying, and pressing in on the monitors. I put the individual slides together against a black background in Photoshop, and then used Adobe Premiere to put the images into a video. When I showed them to the director, he really liked the microphones, however was not so thrilled by the cameras. Therefore he asked me if I could make a microphone montage for both the vertical and horizontal screens. The adjustment was fairly easy and within a couple hours the video montages were finished and ready for the show.
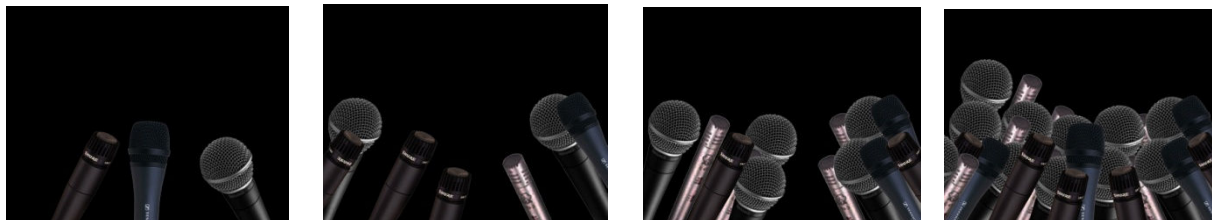
Microphone Growth Sequence

ACT 2 SCENE 6 PART 2: POLITICS AND POSTERS

The debate begins. Brutus, Cassius, Antony, and Octavious all take their places and begin to bash each other in a great bout of political mudslinging. This scene is what I consider to be my crowning achievement in the show. In the initial meetings there hadn't been any plans for political campaign posters, however as they were talking about the two political parties in the show I raised my hand, just like the inexperienced school kid I was, and asked about creating posters to match each party. The director seemed interested in the idea, and we began to talk about it. The first thing I wanted to do was figure out how the political world worked in this play.

We were doing a modern adaptation which took place in Rome where there is currently a parliamentary governing system in place. The concept of two political parties battling it out for one big leadership position was much more like American politics than Roman. However just as he had explained when I had been looking for skyline pictures for Act 1 Scene 3, the director explained that what we were presenting was basically American politics in an alternate universe version of Rome.

As I was searching for some concept to start the poster project with the director suggested that we have a color scheme to go off of: Purple to represent the Brutus/Cassius party, white to represent the Antony/ Octavious party, and gold to act as a unifying element for the Roman government as a whole, similar to the red, white, and blue we use in the United States. One of the first things I wanted to find was a symbol for each party. Something that both represented the group they belong to yet also called back to the heritage of Rome. I started by looking up Roman symbols, of which there were many. For the Brutus/Cassius party I thought the dagger was a very fitting symbol. It was both something traditional in Rome, and it had been with a dagger that they had murdered Caesar. For the Antony/Octavious campaign I decided to use laurels, the traditional Roman symbol of victory and virtue, as if by using them they were saying "The victory is already ours." Having decided on the symbols, I next needed a font for the lettering. I looked through several options until I found something that evoked the feeling of Roman lettering. With these pieces assembled it was now time to start experimenting with how to put it all together.

Left: Brutus/Cassius Horizontal 1, Right Octavious/Antony Horizontal 1

I was very pleased with what I had for my initial designs. They elicited feelings of political campaign propaganda, yet still managed to keep the overall feel of what old world Rome would be like in the twenty-first century. I showed them to the director, and he was pleased but there were still things to improve on. First off, he liked the laurels for Antony, but the dagger on the Brutus poster just wasn't working for him. Since I had done the research on Roman symbols I started listing some other things that symbolized Rome. He listened until I got to the eagle, a symbol that had long held great sway in the Roman world as a sign of military conquest. This appealed to him, so I went back to Photoshop to see what I could do. As I was looking up the eagle I started to think more about American politics. In our political system each party is represent both by a color and by an animal: The donkey for the Democrats and the elephant for the Republicans. Since we now had an animal to represent the Brutus party, why not also have an animal for the Antony party. From the list of symbols I had given the director he thought that the wolf would be nice, which I completely agreed with. The wolf was a symbol of heritage in Rome, a representation of their very foundation. There we had it: Brutus vs. Antony. Eagle vs. Wolf. Military conquest vs. heritage and tradition. It was a powerful statement, which I was all too

happy to work with.

Left: Brutus/ Cassius Vertical, Right: Octavious/ Antony Vertical Early Draft

In my initial work with the animals, I first tried a howling wolf head for the Antony campaign; however the director was not exactly thrilled by it. I brought up the legend of the founding of Rome again, and he wondered if I could make something that more directly called back to the wolf suckling the Roman founders, which I managed to locate and add to the poster. One thing about these posters was that there needed to be both vertical posters and horizontal posters to match each of the screens, which gave me a little more freedom. On the vertical Brutus poster I had a picture of an eagle swooping down, as if to grab his/her victim while on the horizontal I created an image of proud Roman eagle with outstretched wings, as if already declaring victory. For the Antony campaign I decided to use the wolf only on the vertical and the laurels only on the horizontal, thus giving him two symbols, both of which worked together.

Top Left: Brutus/Cassius Horizontal 2, Top Right: Octavious/Antony Vertical 2, Bottom:

Octavious/Antony Horizontal 2

I was so proud of these designs, which, after getting approval from the director, I gave to

Marty to put in the slide show. However, Marty decided to add his own touch to the posters by

adding actual images of the candidates onto them, using my images and combining them with the

images he had to make something even more beautiful. On these not only did he have the images,

but he used gradation in the colors where I had not. When I had been creating the posters, I had

left them flat because that's generally how campaign posters were, however now that I saw the

gradation I realized that it was much more fun to go for the artistic over the more realistic. I felt

ashamed for having played it safe in the first place, and decided to make a couple more artistic

adjustments to at least one of my original designs.

Brutus/Cassius Horizontal With Gradation Effect

This brings me to those fund-raising posters from Act 2 Scene 5 that the director asked me to create. Herb wanted me to create two posters, one saying "Out Raise 'Em" and the other "Outspend 'Em," thus giving a portrayal of the financial aspects involved in politicking. I decided that in keeping with the theme of the Brutus/Cassius campaign I would use the posters I had already created and alter them, thus giving a sense of consistency.

Fundraising Posters 1 and 2

ACT 2 SCENE 8 PART 1: TO THE VICTORS

The election is decided! The new rulers of Rome: Antony and Octavious! To proclaim this moment the director asked me to create newspaper headlines that matched this grand proclamation of victory. While the political posters were my crowning achievement because I first suggested them, these headlines were my greatest artistic achievement. In order to create these pieces I had to do more research than anywhere else in the show. Marty helped me significantly by showing me what he thought would be a great design, and showing me what professional newspapers looked like. I decided to base the biggest part of my design using the New York Times as inspiration. I did research to find out exactly what kinds of fonts were used in the newspaper, and then duplicated the effect on my images. I named the newspaper the Roman Times, simple but still sticking to the theme, and decided to write a small article on the election which I could use as text on the faux newspaper to make it seem more real. Now that I had my font, I decided to use a light gray gradation for the paper part of the design, giving it the

effect of being lit. For the picture in the center Marty provided the images of the people, while I used the picture of the SPQR flag we had been using as a filler element throughout the design process as a background for the figures to stand against. Upon completion I decided the image itself was too flat, so I created a gradient that, when overlaid on top of the image and set to Multiply, made it look almost as if the flag were waving, giving a greater feeling of depth.

Newspaper Headlines 1 and 2

I was extremely proud of these designs, and for a while the director was happy with them as well. However, he decided that since we were in Europe it would be much better if instead of a newspaper we used tabloid magazines. He gave me the name of a German tabloid which I looked up and used as a base for my new designs. From the issues I had found of the magazine I observed that there were several consistent elements which I could use, namely the boarder on the cover, the bar code, and the general color scheme. For the border I color matched samples off a picture of the magazine and created my own version. Next, to make it more real, I Photoshopped the bar code and put them onto my version, giving a greater feeling of authenticity. I kept the name "Roman Times" but used a different font to match those found in the tabloid. I managed to recycle the images I had made in newspaper photos onto the new tabloid covers. It took a while to create, but eventually we had our own Photoshopped tabloid. When I made the tabloid though, I made it in a vertical orientation. What we needed was something to fit a

horizontal screen, so I created a solid black background, and rotated the tabloid until I managed to get it to fit into the frame in a way I thought showcased all the best features of the design yet still provided a dynamic image in and of itself.

Left: Full Tabloid, Right: Angled Tabloid

ACT 2 SCENE 8 PART 2: HANGMAN

After hearing the news of their opponent's victory, Cassius, ever the proud, decides it's better to take her life by her own hands than let Antony and his guards do it. This dramatic scene takes place inside a posh hotel room overlooking the city. For this I needed to find pictures that suited the locale, so I gathered numerous hotel room interior shots, from wide angle shots of the full room to minor details like a vase on a nightstand. I showed them to the director, and he chose one shot that he really liked. The problem with that image was that it was looking out onto a bright, foggy morning while the scene took place in the city at night. Now, while it would have been possible to just look for another image it seemed much more practical to simply Photoshop the picture to create the image the director wanted. To do so, I first brought the image into Photoshop, and then used the eraser tool to edit out everything outside the window. Next, I

brought in an image of the skyline from earlier, and placed it behind the hotel room. After that all I needed was to alter the light of the room so it seemed more like a night time shot, which, after a couple moments altering settings, completed the image.


Left: Original Hotel Room, Right: Photoshopped Hotel Room

ACT 2 SCENE 10: THE END

The final scene in the play. Brutus, having lost everything, must pay a visit to the morgue to confirm that the body there is indeed that of his lover Cassius. For this scene I was asked to do two things: Find interior shots of a morgue and create a placard that actually said "Morgue" on it. For the interior shots I managed to track down one shot of an autopsy table and one shot of the drawers in which they store the bodies. Simple, yet gruesomely effective. For the placard, I thought about what kind of sign would actually be used to identify a place as a morgue. When I think of morgue I imagine some underground location, hidden in the basement of a building. As I thought this over I decided that what I wanted to create was an image that looked like someone had taken an industrial stencil and spray painted the word "morgue" onto a concrete wall. The image itself would lack warmth, which would go nicely with the feel of the scene. First I found an image of a concrete texture, which I then colored with a low saturation blue tint for effect. Next I looked up industrial fonts, and chose one that looked like an industrial stencil. I chose a

red color for the font which stood out in stark contrast against the background, and then put a bit of diffusion around the lettering to give it that spray painted on look.
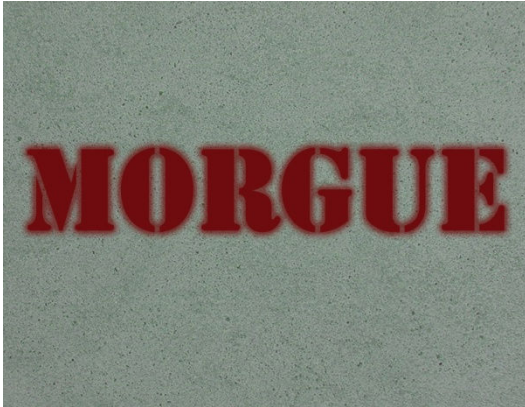
Left: Morgue Placard, Right: Morgue Interior

EPILOGUE:

Everything was assembled. My art work was complete. It was time for the performance! After talking it over with Marty, I handed all my completed work over to him to be assembled into the PowerPoint slideshows that would actually be seen on stage. However, though my artwork was done, my work was not. It was time for tech rehearsal. For several days I would come into the theatre and watch the tech rehearsal from beginning to end, keeping a constant eye on my projections to make sure that the videos played, that everything looked good, and that everything came on when it was supposed to. The first problem we encountered was the television monitors. Over the course of the technical rehearsal period we struggled on and off with making them function as they should.

In order to operate the slideshow we had four computers stationed in the wings, one matched to each monitor. The four computers were controlled by two technicians. It was up to Marty and I to coordinate with these technicians and the stage manager to make sure all the cues for the projections were where they should be. Occasionally a slide would be out of place or a video wouldn't play properly, and we would have to go into the slideshow and move things

around until it worked. Also, if the director decided on adding new material or adding alterations to the current material during the rehearsal process (which he did a lot) we would have to manually import the new slides into the program and make sure they flowed neatly with everything else.

This period of review and alteration occurred every rehearsal for possibly 3 to 5 hours a day for the entire week until opening night. By that time we were fairly confident everything was working okay. That's when disaster struck! I was coming in a couple hours before opening night to add what could possibly have been my fifth version of the assassination montages into the computer, and it was a blessed thing I did! When I got to the computer I discovered that one of the monitors just kept flashing on and off like some creepy effect from a horror movie. I was worried so I contacted the stage manager and then the technicians. We tried messing with it; however nothing we did worked! It just kept on flashing, on and off. I had remembered Marty saying something about a program that was on the computers called Cold Play which erased new material when the computers were cut off; therefore I was scared to turn the entire thing off for fear of the remote possibility that everything might be deleted. I was wondering how this happened when one of the technicians revealed the culprit! It turns out that the stage manager, Will McCall, had uttered the word 'Macbeth' just an hour before. In theatre lore it is forbidden to ever say the word Macbeth, especially on opening night! In doing so, the technician believed that he had cursed the play, and brought this disaster upon us! Was it true? Were we cursed? I didn't know, but one thing was for sure: we were in a whole lot of trouble.

In a fit of panic the stage manager tried calling both Herb and Marty to find out what should be done. For a long time we got no reply, and thus we had to start thinking resourcefully. Only a couple hours until the show I dashed over the digital media center. Marty and I had been

keeping all the files for the show in an administrator only file on the Digital Media server so we could easily share our materials. I figured that if I got every file on the server than even if we had to turn off the whole computer we would at least be able to rapidly reassemble the slide show according to the technicians' notes. When I got there however, a miracle occurred! I had just finished downloading all the files when I decided to look around on the incredibly slim chance that Marty would be in the building, and lo and behold he was! Despite it being after the normal business hours I found him sitting in one of the classrooms giving advice to a student. I told him the situation, and off we rushed to the theatre.

When we got there he assessed the problem and, having confirmed that Cold Play wouldn't harm our files, he restarted everything. That helped a bit, but now we had a new problem. Marty had deduced that the monitor was broken, however the signal that connected the computer to the TV onstage was still working. In order to set things up one person had to stand at the TV and shout out which direction to move the mouse until it was over all the buttons that needed to be pressed while the other sat at the computer listening to the instructions. Meanwhile a third person was out looking for a new monitor that we could use. Time was running short. The audience was starting to show up at the doors. As we worked with the equipment the director made the tough decision to hold opening the house until everything was fixed. The audience waited for twenty minutes, standing in the hallway as we worked. Eventually we managed to 'borrow' a monitor from a nearby computer lab, and, after checking everything one last time, finished our set up and fled the scene, finally allowing the audience to come in for the very first performance of *Julius Caesar 2012*.

It was a climactic and nerve wrecking end to all the work I had been doing for the show throughout the semester, but finally everything that the entire crew had put together was going to

be viewed by a live audience. I didn't stay for opening night, mostly because I had seen the play seven times, but as I walked to my car to head home I felt an overwhelming sense of accomplishment at all I had been able to do. I had created video, made pieces of art, and even helped avert a major onstage crisis! It was a wonderful experience, and I was still thrilled with everything we had done. Rome may not have been built in a day, but from the feel of all I had experienced during this project I knew that the memories I made helping to create our own little version of Rome would last a lifetime.