

## Introduction

The following is a documentation of a music video production entitled “You Woke up the Dog” by Sonja Schmer-Galunder and for the band Blowback. The artist was present during production time offering direct feedback. We choose this project because we have a high interest in music, especially electronic/alternative music and visual arts. A digital camera and the editing program Premier are suitable tools to convey personal ideas and messages.

## Analysis

Given the content and style of the video, the target audience’s interests are underground/alternative music. There is also strong political and sexual content in the video. These aspects could alienate some demographic groups – so the actual target group, or “end-user” has well defined interests in these areas. However, the video is ideally intended to provoke a wider audience who perhaps have not been exposed to themes and music such as this.

The goals of the project were to create a personal visual interpretation of the music in a video/film format for the client – the band Blowback. Blowback’s music is primarily electronic, with influences from dub, punk, hip-hop, jazz and drum n’ bass. The song for which this video was made, “You Woke Up the Dog”, features a spoken-word performance and electronic music. The lyrics deal with themes such as: alienation, animal/ male aggression, terrorism, dreams and violence. The concepts for the video are: to use a “white clown” character in different every-day and/or strange scenarios to highlight the tensions touched on by the lyrical content and music, to create visual/psychological tension by placing a clown in public, and to create tension by placing this clown in violent sexual situations.

This character can represent an average, unremarkable, anonymous male in society. By putting the character in makeup and costume he is made visible and remarkable for the viewer and thus “exposed”. The inner-state of the character is made visible. The colour white is used as symbol for innocence and purity. The clown symbolises joy and comedy, but can also symbolise sadness. These archetypal clown associations conflict with what the clown in the video is doing – e.g. sleeping in a locker at the train station, smoking, driving a stolen car, dealing drugs, drinking alcohol, having sex with prostitutes. This is done on purpose to underline and highlight the irony between what the visualised symbol represents (i.e. idealized every-day life) and the invisible thoughts, emotions, abusive desires or fantasies of a male in western capitalist society.

The purpose of the video is to complement the music - and to support the record sales of the band “Blowback” by giving the song a strong visual identity.

Lyrics of the song “You woke up the dog”

++++

## Storyboard and Design

The following is a flow of pictures taken from the video to give a storyboard structure. Additionally, you will find an interpretation and analysis of the narrative and the design. The storyboard consists of a series of everyday activities of an average person in our society, whose condition is weakened through certain types of addictiveness. For the purpose of the video this was exaggerated and intensified. Here are the most significant sequences:



Storyboard: A person in white clown makeup and white clothes comes out of a locker where he apparently lives.

Interpretation: The person was locked in before –metaphor for a “locked in” personality.

Design: Black and white are used to mark a “normal” state of the main actor. The re-occurring ambiguity between “reality” and “state of mind” is symbolised with the change of colour. The repeated square shapes imply banality, anonymity, living in boxes, cookie cutter society.



Storyboard: The main actor knocks on other lockers and opens them up.

Interpretation: He is searching for others of his kind, but his search is not successful.

Design: Black and white with blue and red areas. The colourful areas are hinting to something exiting around him, e.g. romantic ideas somewhere close by. The clown is very large in the centre of the screen



Storyboard: The clown driving a car. Red lines animated on the street.

Interpretation: The lines indicate that he is driving toward some goal. He is on his way somewhere else. The car is probably stolen.

Design: Still black and white with red lines. Red is used for visualisation of red lights on the street. The perspective is now that of a passenger behind the clown's head.



Storyboard: Clown is standing in a line.

Interpretation: He is part of a line, part of society: He is trying to interact and only visible as different to the viewer. Waiting in a line symbolises waiting for something.

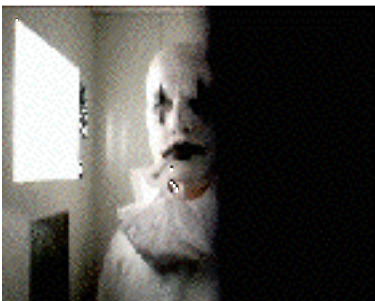
Design: Black and white with blue. The colour blue is only used for the "world outside". Zooming in on the clown repeatedly in time with the music. The composition now places the clown among others.



Storyboard: Clown is dealing drugs.

Interpretation: The opposition of the clown as a symbol and the act of taking drugs are meant to provoke. The drugs will help him to escape from his state of being different.

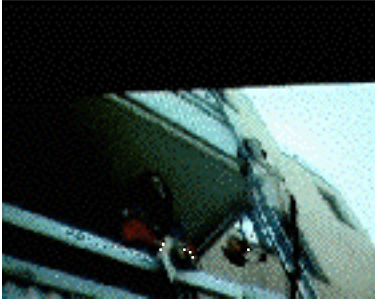
Design: Black and white with colour somewhere else, but again not in the immediate surroundings. The shot is still very much focused on the clown.



Storyboard: Clown disappears behind the curtain of a photo-booth.

Interpretation: He is hiding and disappears in another area, e.g. dream state. The white window hints towards where he will turn his head.

Design: Colours are used for clarifying that he is under the influence of drugs and thus more at ease. Yet he is entering another square shaped, and thus artificial environment.



The film is projected on him and thus it seems like he is interacting with the film.

Interpretation: With the help of drugs the world becomes more colourful to him. The projected film is the world as he perceives it. He sees, tries to interact, but feels he cannot reach out or access it. He wants to be part of something happening next to him but remains helpless.

Design: The colour film is projected on white screen and man. The change of colour marks another level within the film. Usage of words to stress the message, “tranquil dreams” – he is high, “the tale never ends” – he is addicted, struggles. The clown is much smaller here.



Storyboard: Clown is sitting alone in the auditorium.

Interpretation: He decides to become more passive and watches the “film” instead. He is a voyeur. He is alone.

Design: White Clown on coloured background – he stands out. The camera perspective is chosen to make it look as if he is not projected and we watch him watching. The multi-coloured seats are missing people – the clown is not in the centre and is small.



Storyboard: He walked along the street and enters a bar, where he sits down and smokes and drinks.

Interpretation: He comes down from his trip, enters reality. He anaesthetizes himself with alcohol and cigarettes.

Design: Going back to some level of reality - black and white again. No lyrics and no action – focus on his acting. Clown is large in the frame again. He drinks from a circle shaped glass and his head is round, both organic forms.



Storyboard: He watches an old lady gambling and laughs.

Interpretation: pure madness

Design: Colours, twin-peaks scenario, beauty. The clown and gambler share the frame equally. His whiteness draws our eye first to him, but then since he is looking at her, we follow his gaze and focus on the gambler and slot machine.



Storyboard: Children mock the Clown.

Interpretation: He tries again to interact, this time with children, but they only see the Clown in him and this makes him angry.

Design: we are behind the large white head of the clown which contrasts with the dark school-yard. We share the clown's perspective and the children are also laughing at us.



Storyboard: He chases the children.

Interpretation: He plays with the children, tries to catch them.

Design: Here comes a flash animation – to signify the change coming and as a transition. White on black night reinforcing conflicts and tensions. The clown is small, but bright white lines are leading our eye directly to him .



Storyboard: Two prostitutes are arrive at the Clown's "home", which is a run-down cellar

Interpretation: He seeks pleasure. He sees the womn as a means to satisfy his needs.

Design: Scenery becomes underground-like. The leather-sofa and naked skin return to organic shapes contrasting with the square room. The clown and the women are strangely at home in this environment.



Storyboard: He has violent sex with the women.

Interpretation: He has violent sex with the women.

Design: The shot was taken in order to make the point clear without showing explicit sex scenes. The clown is behind the women, but he is still the focus of the composition and it is his face we can see clearly.



Storyboard: Black and white pictures slide in for a second

Interpretation: These incongruous shots imply something ominous, as if these might be the last pictures taken of these women.

Design: Black and white portraits. The angle is straight on and the women's faces are expressionless.



Storyboard: Two prostitutes are annoyed with him.

Interpretation: Here are different kinds of interpretation possible – one might be that the clown prefers his own auto-erotism, they also could be mocking him.

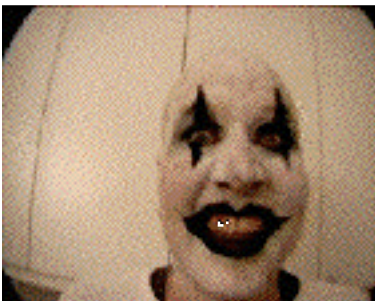
Design: Underground environment should create a feeling of disguise. The women sit on a leather sofa, which doesn't belong in a run-down cellar.



Storyboard: Camera moves around the room, capturing the rest of the clown's lair in disarray.

Interpretation: Again the interpretation is up to the viewer, but it is very likely to believe that something (not shown) has happened - maybe a murder?

Design: We see discarded items scattered around, possibly a pool of blood on the floor, odd shapes and colours add to the confusion.



Storyboard: Clown close-up, crazy facial expression

Interpretation: He seems to look through the camera right into the face of the watcher, as if he realizes that he has been observed and he relishes this, then a warning gaze – who might be the next? He is also reminding us that we share his depravity.

Design: shoot taken in a kitchen without costume to bring him closer to the viewer. Maybe he waits in your kitchen? His round head contrasts with the straight white lines of the cupboards behind him.

## Structure and Method

The idea for the film found its inspiration in the painting “Soir bleu” by Edward Hopper (1914, Whitney Museum of American Art, N.Y.). The painting is of a solitary white clown sitting in a bar. Most of the painting is in dark hues, the clown, however, is painted very white. The idea was to try to recreate the striking visual elements of the painting in a film format. After the first week of discussions with other colleagues, brainstorming ideas and mental structuring the idea for a music video featuring a similar white clown to the one in the painting became the focus of planning. The clown would also visit a bar and do other “every-day” things.

The two weeks of actual working time were distributed unequally with one day of storyboard writing, one day for organisation - camera, costume, makeup and props, one day of filming and 9 days of work on the computer. This could have been done better with better preparation and planning. Once the actor had been chosen, in order to visually imitate the painting as much as possible, we had to convince him to shave his head. This was accomplished by promising the actor money, drugs and dandruff shampoo. We only had use of a digital camera for 24 hours and the main actor left town immediately after shooting. These factors made it impossible for us to re-shoot scenes if it would have been necessary. Ideas for scenes often occurred spontaneously on location in reaction to an environment, so much of the video is the result of on the spot planning.

With more time, this aspect of shooting could have been exploited to a greater degree. When shooting in public places we were sometimes asked not to film people who hadn't agreed to be filmed. When we shot in the bar, the proprietors requested that none of the guests be filmed. The request was mostly ignored. .Sonja Schmer-Galunder wrote the storyboard. The camera used was a Canon DV 20 borrowed from Frans Hällqvist, Räserproduktion. The costume was rented from Maskeradgarderoben in Limhamn, Malmö. Blowback is Andrew Smart. The spoken word performance was done by Troy Fiscella. The main actors were Jay Bradley Delange, Sonja Schmer-Galunder and Åsa Linnèr..

The editing was done in Premiere 6.0 on Macintosh format (G4). The film was put into Director 8.0.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Hours</b>
03/12/01	Writing of Storyboard, Brainstorming, Collection of different thoughts	10
04/12/01	Organisation of costumes, Talking to actors, checking locations, organizing camera, buying technical equipment, testing	10
05/12/01	Makeup, filming	10
06/12/01	Digitalisation of filmclips into the computer, organisation of clips and first project order	8
07/12/01	Clipping of film, writing Report	10
10/12/01	Clipping, Animations, Report writing, recording the song, writing off lyrics	12
11/12/01	Clipping, animating,	12
12/12/01	Clipping, animating, tests	10
13/12/01	Work with transitions, testing, importing animations, CD cover	10
14/12/01	Work in Director, exporting files, tests, writing report, Burning CD, waiting	12
16/12/01	Writing report, test at different computers, Director	10
17/12/01	Writing Report, Director, Testing	10
	<b>Total working hours</b>	124

Further work with the project

Yes.

## Problems and Solutions

I wanted to have Flash animations that go together with the film. In order to do that I had to export a sequence of the film as a gif-animation. (and not as gif sequence – which creates one file for every picture). This created one file with a keyframe for every picture of the sequence and thus a background for the flash animation. The flash animation was imported into Premier and the background was made transparent with a screen filter. An additional problem was the difference of the frame rates. I had to change the frame rate in Flash to 25 fps.

The working format of 720x576 pixels and a frame rate of 25 fps, as well as the high quality of the sound made the file very big. Working on the Macintosh G4 made this easier and the usage of Cleaner 5 helped to reduce the file size. Still the compression of the file resulted in a worse picture quality than expected.

I also faced a problem when I tried to put filmclips into the 3<sup>rd</sup> video channel. This caused wrong previews and Premiere did not work as well anymore.

Towards the end of the editing process 3 filmclips showed a very bad quality in Premiere. It was difficult to figure out why that happened, but there is a chance that it might that these clips had been reversed and/or the speed had been changed.

Several tests for the QT format of the film on different computer formats did not work as wanted.

## Technical Analysis

We chose a fullscreen DV-PAL format (720x576) in order to make it possible to use it for TV use. To guarantee high music quality the song was not compressed in Soundforge but left in the 44010 Mhz, 16-bit, stereo format.

Fonts...