

# Critical evaluation of as media production



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For our A2 Media Production coursework, we were asked to create a pop music video for any desired genre of music. We started to research many genres of music video's ranging from rap and hip hop to rock and metal. We finally decided after short listing about ten songs to create a video for the Thrash Metal anthem Raining Blood by Bay-Area metal band Slayer.

"Raining Blood" is the final track from thrash metal band Slayer's 1986 album, Reign in Blood, and is quite possibly their most famous song as it is their signature song. The song has become a live staple played at almost every Slayer show since its release, and is featured on every Slayer live album and DVD. Due to the sheer popularity in mainstream modern culture, we knew making a video for the song would be a tough task and needed a definite theme running throughout. We studied over video's of the Metal genre, ranging from 80's metal bands such as Metallica's video for the song One, where a soldier has lost his mind and used clips from the film, Johnny Got His Gun (a 70's anti-war film based on a novel) The idea of having a character losing his mind and becoming insane appealed to the group largely, as it fitted in well with the lyrical theme's of the song.

Another video that we drew much inspiration from was, surprisingly, of a non-metal genre. The video for drum and bass outfit Aphex Twin's song, Come To Daddy (Directed by Chris Cunningham). The setting of the video, a really derelict council building, seemed a very good location as it represented the raw aggression and heaviness that the band Slayer have within their music. Quickly after the research stage, we began to storyboard basic, primitive idea's, some of which did not make the final cut of our video.

One such idea was to somehow use fake blood on some of the band shots. In the end we thought this was too clichéd and cheesy. We also shortlisted several locations in the Greater Manchester area including derelict libraries and an abandoned hospital in Warrington. The group one day stumbled across the perfect location that was right under our noses, an old Crankshaft Factory in the town of Eccles, somewhere that all members of the group were familiar with.

After a brief excursion to the site, and a safety check was done on the building, the green light was given for us to film within the premises. We felt as if the rugged, industrial feel of the building was perfect for the character we had in mind. Before we can production we had to construct a strong narrative that could run through the video along side the main band shots. This is where inspiration from video's such as One by Metallica(mentioned previously) and Death Metal song Homage to Satan by Deicide started influence the narrative we were thinking of.

The music video for British Metal Legends, Iron Maiden's Be or Quick Be Dead(1991) played a big part in our group choosing an industrial setting for our video. In the genre of Metal, songs take a much more serious and sometimes evil lyrical themes, such as the song we had chosen, which talks about death, being trapped and hell. We built a story around these. We decided that the video should contain a male, dressed in an old suit or formal clothing to wake up in a derelict building where he used to work, only to find everything he knew and loved has been destroyed. This included his dead wife/partner, which he finds dead(with her eyes open) in a room.

We wanted to capture the raw emotion that one would feel in this situation. The first line of the song is “ Trapped in Purgatory” we wanted to incorporate this and seem as if where the man protagonist had woken up was a worse fate than death. There were many snags that we encountered while filming the video, mostly to do with the location. For example, transporting a drum kit back and forth to the abandoned factory was exceedingly hard. To get around this problem, we decided to use a green screen instead of using the building for band shots. This helped us as we could repeatedly film the band shots without the hassle of transporting instruments, so we had more time to focus on what we were doing.

One prior idea that we were keen on doing was having a large crowd of people in the band shots, such as in the video for Slipknots song Duality, yet we couldn't get people to come due to conflicting available time slots. Part 2A convention of certain genre's of music, such as Hip Hop, is to be glamorous and look sharp, such as in the video Lost One by Jay Z. In this particular video, the artist is shown with highly expensive “ bling” and is rapping next to high status sports cars. Yet in the genre of Metal, or even rock, video's generally show a more rough edge and darker tone. This is evident in such video's as Everlong by Foo Fighters, where two characters are stuck in parallel nightmares.

The artist in our video, Slayer, is represented as evil, unforgiving and serious. One of the ways that we contributed to keeping the tone of the video as serious was the facial expressions of the band, in particular the singer. We instructed the actor to keep a very serious face, and to look sinister at times, something that was portrayed very well. We represented the protagonist in a

way that he would be alien to the heavy music of slayer, through the use of old fashioned dress code and a more “ nerdy” outfit.

IF we would have dressed the charcter in a big leather jacket and a slayer t-shirt, he would have looked too much like a fan instead of a charcter. Slayer are known as one of the pioneers of modern metal, in the early 80's they were one of four bands (Metallica, Anthrax and Megadeth) to create a genre of music that pathed the way for popular metal. The demographic of people we aimed to target ran from teenagers right through to the older generation of metal fans, that may have liked Slayer when they were “ no bodies”. The genre of Thrash Metal was created to rebel against main streem “ cheesy” forms of rock, such as Glam bands like KISS and Whitesnake, we took this into account when eliminating any comedic or sterotypical long hair, tight pants and denim jackets. Another generic convention of Metal video's (not just Thrash Metal) is having shots of the whole band playing while “ moshing” or “ rocking out”. This is evident in such video's as Left Behind by Slipknot(2001).

This shows unity within band and connects with the audience, as many fans like to “ mosh” during concert's while the band are playing. In doing so, the band seem as if they know what the audience like to do, and brings the band/fans closer together. We used our narrative to connect with our main demographic of audience, which was teens who watch music video's. We used the theme of a struggle and insanity as many fans of slayer will be fans of horror films and everything of the darker side of the coin. The two genre's of Metal and Horror have very strong conotations, through having the same glorified idea's of death and killing.

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The concept of losing everything has driven our character insane, and the audience can't help but watch to see more. The connection between Horror and Metal can be seen in music video's such as recently released All Nightmare Long by Metallica, in this video the narrative is more like a short film than a music video, as it tells the story of the world after a nuclear war. Despite wanting some horror in our video, we did not want to completely overdo it and have a short film instead of a music video. We also didn't want to put people off the band by making the video too disturbing, thus we created a good mix of mild peril and good band shots. Part 3 The video that we produced, despite being a hugely popular song, would still only be for a niche market. Unlike many artists that have widespread appeal, Slayer is generally only appealing to fans of that genre, as it's rather more extreme than pop music.

Because of this, many main stream music channels may not show it. The market we would be looking at is the likes of Scuzz, Kerrang and MTV2. All these channels are specifically made for the more rock/metal genre of music. Magazine's would also help the promotion of the new video, such as magazines of Metalhammer, Kerrang and Terrorizer regularly feature Slayer in their publications. We previewed our video to some of the other media groups that had made other genre's of music video's such as Gnarles Barkley and Duffy. All the feedback we received was very good, and many people thought the video had a good mix of Heavy Metal connotations, yet still kept its feet on the ground and didn't get too "tongue in cheek".

This was something we really aimed to avoid, as many video's are too stereotypically of that genre. It's not uncommon in Metal Video's for a

production to have a low budget, as more focus is put on selling albums, merchandise and live tickets. This is a direct reason as to why many bands of the genre don't release more than one or two singles. For example, on one of the most famous Metal albums of all time, *Master of Puppets* by Metallica, no videos were made.

Yet in modern music, the genre is becoming more up to date in making more videos, such bands as Slipknot, Lamb of God and DevilDriver are leading the way. In today's music business, many bands are turning to the internet as a way of getting their videos or songs across, yet as much as Slayer are already a huge name within the business, I still think the video would benefit