

CONTROL (Inspired by Kendrick Lamar)

SYNOPSIS:

Seeking comfort after André Bazin's funeral, Orson Welles (43) asks a Priest (25) to walk with him to his car. Welles' distress worsens as the Priest is unable to satisfy Welles' questions. Welles blasphemes against God and finds himself at the mercy of the screenplay's author.

WRITER'S STATEMENT:

How can my voice mean anything in the world?

As a film student, I'm frightened about my chances of success in a competitive film industry. As a Filipino immigrant coming from a colonized and imperialized nation, I'm frightened about losing even more of my family's culture; assimilation is the only path to the economic success that my grandparents never enjoyed. As a Filipino-American film student, I'm frightened that by relying on the established conventions of an artistic medium so infused into the history of Western globalization, my art will build on the cultural heritage of oppressors.

The title "Control (Inspired by Kendrick Lamar)" is a refusal to contribute to that heritage, preferring instead to build on the heritage of the rappers and Asian YouTube singers that I admired as a youth. As film is a primarily visual medium, the script often relies more heavily on voices, dialogue, and intertextuality than visual storytelling, more influenced by the conventions of hip-hop and YouTube covers than *The Birth of a Nation*. *Control* is a literary form that utilizes the conventions of cinema, as well as the history it automatically connotes.

Whether performed by Ian McKellen or directed by Michael Avila, the world remembers that Samuel Beckett wrote *Waiting for Godot*. In cinema, however, authorship is debatable. If *Control* were anything more than a script, my voice could easily dissipate into a crowd of collaborators.

As a student in a predominantly white film school, it seems that one of the few ways my voice can survive is to express myself through white stories rather than Filipino-American ones. Hence the use of Orson Welles as my surrogate in *Control*. My voice is whitewashed, but on my own terms.

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EXT. FRENCH CEMETERY - ANDRÉ BAZIN'S GRAVE -
NIGHT

TITLE AND CREDITS appear in a music-video-esque style.

From the sky we see ORSON WELLES (43) in front of a GRAVESTONE adorned by fresh flowers. Behind him, rows of seats and scattered funeral programs.

He stares at the gravestone. Above Welles, gray clouds cover every inch of the sky.

From a distance, a young PRIEST (25), white with a heavy Spanish accent, observes Welles.

CLOSE on gravestone: "A. Bazin. 18 Apr 1918 - 11 Nov 1958."

Welles lays a hand on the gravestone, releases a shaky sigh. He trudges away from the grave.

The Priest approaches Welles.

PRIEST

You must have been quite close.

WELLES

No. I only had the pleasure of being interviewed by him the month before he was hospitalized. He quite admired my work—wouldn't shut up about my continuous take in *Touch of Evil*.

Welles pauses. He dabs a kerchief under his nose.

WELLES

Say, you wouldn't mind walking me to my car, would you? A man could use a friend on a night like this.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The Priest follows Welles down a sidewalk.

PRIEST

I imagine you must have meant a lot to him Señor Welles.

WELLES

The man devised some funny ideas about moving images because of me... Because. Isn't that a funny word.

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The priest strokes his chin. He chuckles.

PRIEST

Because David carried a sling, the Philistines were defeated... Because Jochebed laid Moses in a basket, Israel was delivered... Because God made the world, we enjoy the earth

in all its beauty.

WELLES

Because of Adam, every man is born into sin.

PRIEST

But because a babe is baptized, a man can rise from sin. Were you baptized, Mr. Welles?

WELLES

Fascism rose, despite the fuhrer's baptism.

PRIEST

There must be evil in the world.

WELLES

Because

Commented [1]: question mark after "because"

The Priest pauses. He searches his pockets for a Bible until

WELLES

Because of Leni Riefenstahl Hitler amassed the support of his nation. Because of Muybridge, Edison the Lumières, Riefenstahl empowered the fascists. Because of Griffith the white man hasn't been a greater bane on the negro since the Civil War.

Welles stops walking. His eyes water.

WELLES

Tell me, is cinema a sin?

The Priest approaches Welles, offers him a BIBLE.

PRIEST

Because of God, all can be made right for man. But only if you follow Him and confess.

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Welles shoves the Priest's hand away.

WELLES

What have I to confess? Am I all of cinema then?

PRIEST

You're all of one man. Yet... there may be times when one man must

answer for the wrongs of another.

WELLES

Were we made only to atone for
sins? Were we made only to call
upon God? Must we always mind
higher forces lest we suffer their
wrath?

PRIEST

Señor Welles, I would mind my
words. God strikes those who
blaspheme .

Welles lifts an open palm to the sky.

WELLES

And I strike those who claim...

The Priest crosses himself, ready to take the
hit. Welles lowers his hand. A tear rolls down
his eye.

WELLES

I was a fool to lay such burdens on
a man as young as you.

Welles lifts the Priest's chin.

WELLES

Father, give me one reason why I
must continue in my work. Why
should I make cinema?

WELLES

Because

PRIEST

Because of what?

The Priest looks down.

PRIEST

Be careful of God, Mr. Welles.

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The Priest offers Welles his Bible, Welles accepts it.
The Priest walks away.

Welles pockets the Bible. He looks around at the
empty street, sighs.

He opens the Bible, reads: "Touch of Evil—Written by Orson Welles—Based on Badge of Evil by Whit Masterson."

Welles blinks, confused.

He turns the page, reads: "EXT. U.S. MEXICO BORDER - PARKING LOT - NIGHT. BEGIN CONTINUOUS TAKE."

THUNDER rumbles faintly. Welles looks up at the sky.

The clouds have cleared, exposing a BLACK SKY void of moon and stars, its texture identical to ink on paper.

JOI LANSING's (28) arm slips around Welles'. Welles turns to her.

His eyes widen in horror. She is dressed exactly as Zita in *Touch of Evil*.

EXT. U.S. MEXICO BORDER - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

BEGIN LONG TRACKING SHOT

The AUTHOR (25), a Southeast Asian man in an orange Spillage Village hoodie, winds the timer of a PIPE BOMB, which begins to TICK. He runs to a CONVERTIBLE in the parking lot, places it in the trunk, and sprints away.

Unable to control himself, Welles enters the parking lot with Zita. They enter the ticking convertible and drive off

CUT TO BLACK.