

MY NAME IS SHAUN

DIRECTED BY ANN TOPOLSKY

My name is Shaun is a very genuine short film that briefly gets us to have a look at the life of Shaun who is a hospitality worker. He tries to stay afloat in the creative industry and, also, make a living.

The main character does a great job at being himself. He's not camera shy and we can see that he already formed a bond with the director/director of photography and he relaxed and did his thing. It's rare to obtain this kind of realism when you put a camera in the face of a subject who is a non-actor and not used to having a camera always filming. The situations he was put in didn't seem rehearsed and everything just flowed and came as it is.

The overall feeling of this short film is that we're watching a Vlog, but if we don't know the character or are not a famous person, it's quite hard to follow his story and stay engaged until the very end. He kinda lacked an introduction that could have helped the audience to become empathic and understand where the character is situated at that very moment in his life.

Instead of using a fade for a transition, sometimes it would be better to just cut to the next scene. In vlogs there are no such "rules", but when it comes to short films, to look more beautiful as a whole and more professional, there are a few technical things that a filmmaker can do so the final product could look like a real piece of cinematography. Even if it's a documentary, the image is not the strongest point of this short film. In some scenes, because of the bright light, there are some artefacts and light distortion at times, like in the morning shots.

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Even if it's a documentary, from the beginning we don't really understand if we're watching a fictional film or a documentary one, so the quality of the image is a huge factor in terms of perspective when watching this movie.

A large part of this short film consists in counting money and talking in the background. At some point, this activity became redundant and we wished to see more shots, more different frames that could explain and show the situation from different angles. A camera, a zoom recorder or another mic could have remained on the master shot frame so you could have the whole voice over of what he's saying about money, life and future plans, and the come with other angle shots so you could dynamise the situation and make it more engaging for the audience. At that point the attention span is very easy to lose and it's a shame to lose the public in that middle stage of the story.

The locations used have a great look and are good places where you can shoot because they seem quiet and perfect for this kind of "self taped" shots that have the look of a vlog. The storyline is straight forward, but still feels like we're in the middle of a story that doesn't really have a beginning or an ending and it makes us wonder why we need to see this story. Even if the length of the whole film is ok and offers lots of time to show different aspects and stages of Shaun's life, we still feel like we didn't get to empathize enough with him.

With all that being said, My name is Shaun is definitely a story that needs to be told, but one that we suggested to still continue filming, because we're curious how he is doing after a period of time. Shaun is like any other freelancer nowadays and it's a story that could make a lot of people find themselves in it, but which should be explored more on a larger period of time, instead of, how it feels now, a few days or a week of filming. We wish only the best for Shaun and the team, and may other great documentary projects still come from them.