

**Containment 19 - Brimbank**

- It's a clever concept to set a thriller narrative within the pandemic - it's a great way to work around the filming restrictions as it provides an excuse for different characters to be in different locations. Incorporating real-world COVID signage from a playground into the film was a nice touch.
- Good use of classical music to create a melancholic mood. Classical music tracks are great to use for short films because they are so old you rarely have to worry about copyright. (Note: In some cases, copyright may still exist for the recorded performance itself. I.e. the pianist still holds copyright for their specific performance of a song, even if the song is in public domain. However it's pretty easy to find royalty free recordings online).
- The cinematography is really solid, however there are a few scenes where the blocking and angles chosen could have been changed to make the action easier to follow. For instance, in the early scene where Theodore is watching the news report on TV, it would've been nice to have a wide shot of the room he was in, with both the room and the TV. Similarly, in the scene when Theodore is following the girl home, some wider shots would give the audience a better sense of the geography of the scene. Eg. the shot at 3:12 is great! It has a nice wider frame and the camera movement revealing Theodore by the tree feels like it's straight out of a horror film. More creative shots like this (instead of multiple cuts to extreme close-ups of Theodore's face) would give the scene a more heightened sense of tension.
- Narratively, there are some good concepts at play here, but the character motivations feel a bit murky. Why does Theodore follow the girl home to murder her? The first half of the film we are made to feel sorry for him and his rough family life, but then in the second half, he's a murderer depicted with classic horror movie angles. It can be a fascinating narrative concept to have a protagonist make bad decisions, but we need to be able to see how they came to justify their decisions. Allowing the audience to spend a bit more time with Theodore would perhaps help us understand his thought process better, and the murder would feel less random. The link between murder and mental health is a complex and delicate issue, the intricacies of which are very difficult to unpack in the span of a 5 minute narrative.
- Theodore only realises that staying at home all the time is not normal because he sees lockdown being announced on TV - did he never watch TV before this? Hard to believe he spent all that time at home by himself but never tried watching the news until this day?
- If the girl knew she was being followed, why did she leave her front door unlocked?
- The audio levels could be mixed better to ensure the dialogue is always clear. In the opening scene, Theodore's voiceover is turned down very quiet and feels mumbly, then the news theme is very loud. You can find good tutorials on audio mixing for film on YouTube. As a general rule, it's good to try turning up all dialogue tracks to around -9 decibels, with peaks at -6 decibels. Although at a student film level, it doesn't have to get quite that specific. It can be as simple as watching the film through with your eyes shut, and turning up any sections that feel hard to hear.
- Good credits, no ACDA logo though!

Additional notes from Mez:

- Pronunciation of dialogue could be improved for clarity.
- Music is well timed with the climax of vid