

The Bed Project

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A Brief Note

The Bed Project: Set within the solitary confinement cell at Pitesti Prison, it is a short film which captures the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of temptation Romanian Baptist pastor Ion Curare experiences his last night in prison June 24, 1953. He has been in prison since January 1951. It is a blend of non-verbal theatre and film, following Franz Kroetz's *Request Concert*. *The Bed Project* captures a man facing his demons.

The following production notes constitute some of the written material used in the conception and production of *The Bed Project*. This presentation is intended to give a "behind-the-scenes" look at production through the written documents.

The Bed Project is both a stand-alone film as well as one piece of a play still in the writing phase. In line with the presentation of human suffering and divine intercession (both good and evil), the larger play examines torture through the dramatic arc of one man participating (consciously and unconsciously) in satanic liturgy and over the course of the drama, finding redemption through holy liturgy. The satanic liturgy poetically expresses the horrors at Pitesti Prison in the early 1950s. The holy liturgy is based upon a service held at Pitesti Prison on Saturday mornings from 3:00-5:00 in honor of the political prisoners who suffered there and elsewhere and for those who died.

William and I started discussion about *The Bed Project* in late November while attending the Interferences Theatre Festival at the Hungarian Theatre in Cluj-Napoca.

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These notes are divided into two section: (1) the production notes and script; (2) the production process. These notes are a starting place for future site-specific reproduction. Political prisoners, human torture, religious persecution are still creatures living today in plainer sight than is easy to admit.

THE PRODUCTION NOTES & SCRIPT

Friday afternoon, 15:00 – 19:30

Satanic Liturgy

ORDER	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	CAMERA
0	Security footage	Constant surveillance from terrace.	1. observational footage, constantly streaming until shoot for Satanic Liturgies ends.
A.1	Balloon rising into heaven	Satan's fingers releasing it.	1. w/ backdrop of terrace wall and sky, from below frames balloon's ascent. 2. from terrace or higher/ faculty second-story walkway downward, framing balloon's ascent.
A.2	Balloons falling from terrace to patio	The balloon, begins fall, facing the camera.	1. slow motion, at wall's base, pointed vertical 2. slow motion, on terrace, pointed outward-horizontal at Satan's heel and balloon, Satan's big toe pushes over terrace edge
A.3	Balloon bouncing from grass to patio	The fall from pride.	1. from the terrace, like a man looking over a cliff's edge.
A.4	Balloon coming to rest by steaming soup bowl	The necessity of pride to feed.	1. at bowl level, the balloon's journey in the background.
B.1	Satan lifting steaming soup bowl up to sky	Prisoner sits "Indian style" at back end of patio facing the bed. Satan kneels at front end facing Prisoner.	1. from low to high, in front of Prisoner, framing his chest to a few clicks above the bowl. 2. horizontal and side-on, panning from Satan to bed.

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ORDER	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	CAMERA
B.2	Satan waving the soup bowl in front of Prisoner's nose	Prisoner remains seated. Satan rounds patio to Prisoner's back and returns to knees.	1. from directly in front of Prisoner, showing Satan's sweet embrace of him. 2. from opposite side, as if peering over Satan's shoulder at the bowl. (e.g. waving with right hand, shoot over S's left shoulder.
C.1	Satan's Dance	Just as dogs walk a circle before sleep. So, Satan encircles the patio, revolting and resisting God, while casting a spell over Prisoner.	1. follows Satan's feet's circular motion, especial eyes to toe, arch, and heel. 2. close-up tracking Satan's shoulders, neck, hair. 3. security-camera perspective from terrace.
C.2	Satan pouring soup into Prisoner's mouth	Satan tips Prisoner's chin.	1. from above, see Prisoner's face come full into view 2. sideways-down view of soup sloshing in bowl with bed in view. 3. the bowl tipping, nearly spilling over. 4. the excess drops splashing onto the patio.
C.3	Satan letting slip the bowl to shatter on patio	Satan rises and drops the bowl in between the space of the Prisoner's legs.	1. the fingers one-by-one releasing. 2. from behind the bedsprings, angled downwards, captures the bowl fall and crash.
D.1	Prisoner is leaving the church he constructed in his imagination.	At the Calvin Reformed Church, Str. Mihail Kogalniceanu 21. Movement from the side-entrance to the central-entrance.	1. close to Prisoner's face off-set by aged wooden door. 2. from in front as the prisoner lifts the bed and carries to central-door, showing a journey.
D.2	Statue standing center, in front of central doors.	Bedframe lying down, central, in the background.	1. bottom third of frame, statue and above, the limestone walls of the church rising.
D.3	Prisoner standing bed against the back wall	The end of the journey from the church of his imagination to the cell.	1. ground at a diagonal, with emphasis on feet and metal 2. eye level and downward, from behind bed-springs as if imprisoned, then viewing Prisoner's fingers release the bed.

ORDER	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	CAMERA
E.1	Satan releases the balloon.	Satan struts in round-about, wavy motion, supply releasing balloon as if w/out effort.	1. from above to below, focusing on Satan's aloof fingers.
E.2. E.2. cntd.	Prisoner puts on Bluetooth headphones.		1. traces headphones from his pocket to his head. 2. fixates on his adjustment of the headphones to his ear. 3. Still, from behind, the black wire across the back of the neck, pan up to bedframe.
F.1	Prisoner urinates on top of the mess he's made.	Statue lies on prison floor in pieces. His feet are bleeding. Satan has taken control.	1. pans from low to high, capturing daughter shards and his back. 2. tracks the prisoner from behind in a waving motion, following urine stream.

Saturday afternoon, 14:00 - 19:30

Scene Design:

Satan is responsible for ending the Bed Project. To end the project, Satan must gain control over the prisoner. To do this, Satan speaks to the prisoner through a telephone.

The prisoner listens in on Satan's commands through Bluetooth headphones inside of his ear.

Satan communicates the entire text twice in order to gain absolute control over the prisoner, thus diverting the prisoner from his own liturgy into Satan's liturgy.

Ultimately, Satan achieves control through leading the prisoner in prayer, which leads the prisoner to bed, thus ending the Bed Project.

SCRIPT

SATAN

[Speaking through the prisoner's ear-piece]

Two-by-four meters,
And only the bread, only the mash, only the soup;
Just two-by-four meters,
And your 42 kilos.

Better to have hell in you and heaven around, eh?
Up at 5 and down at 10. Again.
You're half blanket and half man.
You eat your teeth.
Then, do-do in a can.
Water can.
Do what you can!

How's the weather.
Cold?
I'll feed you twice
And walk you, just do what I say:
come with me.

The light's going off.
Sun's going down, see?
Stumble, stumble, slop.

Dinner's here!
You don't get bread. No mash. Only soup.
Eat your soup, or I'll come in there!

You, half-man, half-blanket.
All in time.
You pass for living:
I can change that.

Set you free!
And give you mash and then bread!
And tell you how good you've been.
And give you your teeth back.
And a toilet seat.

Do you like to read?
Or listen to the birds?
How bout a window, eh?

Roll over.
Again.
Stop.

Pant.
Bark.
Circle! Circles! Circle!
Curl up, you dog.
Now, rock.
Back and forth.

You look drunk.
Say, "Angel."
Louder.
Louder!
Now, whisper, "Angel."
Softer!
Softer.

Do you love her?
Say, "I love her."
Forceful.
More of it!

To your knees.
Fold your hands.

Pray, "I hate her,"
Or, I'll take away your soup.
Pray it, "I-Hate-Her."
To me!
Pray it to me.

Shut up.

I said, shut up.

Two-by-four meters.
Go on and eat your soup.
It's getting cold.

You're going to eat it without first eying it?
Alright, if you won't try the soup, try the door.
It's gray.
Isn't gray nice:
Gray walls, gray floors, gray pants.
Maneuver the door.
Manure on the floor!
No handle, eh?

Your soup is cold by now.
Find it,
Feel for it,
Listen to it,
Stir it,
Smell it out,
It's right under your nose.
Stop!

[Repeat 2-3 times depending on the 30-minute time frame, then]

Go to bed.
No bed, eh?
Oh well, then pray with me:

Dead in Heaven:

I soil your name;
Your kingdom burns
and your will is undone in heaven as I am on earth;
I starve these worms of their bread;
I condemn them to death as they condemn their daughters;
I lead them to temptation and deliver them over to evil:

This is my solemn wish for them –

In death.

[Motherly] Hush child. Now, you can sleep.

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

SET

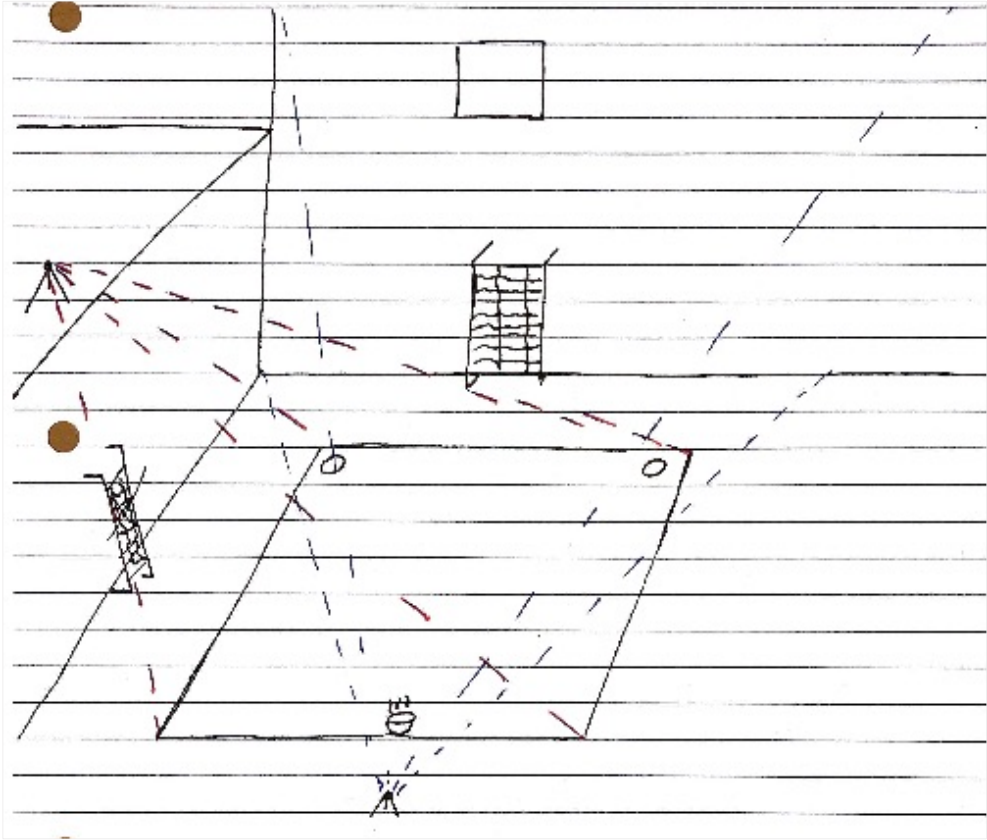


Fig. 1. The above image is a sketch of the Faculty of Theatre and Film courtyard. It is a concept drawing which explores the field of vision available to the camera in any one shot. It is the artist processing a historically based prison cell model from Sighet Prison, and imaginatively repurposing the cell's articles in order to amplify the prisoner's experience of physical, psychological, and spiritual temptation.

NARRATIVE DIAGRAM

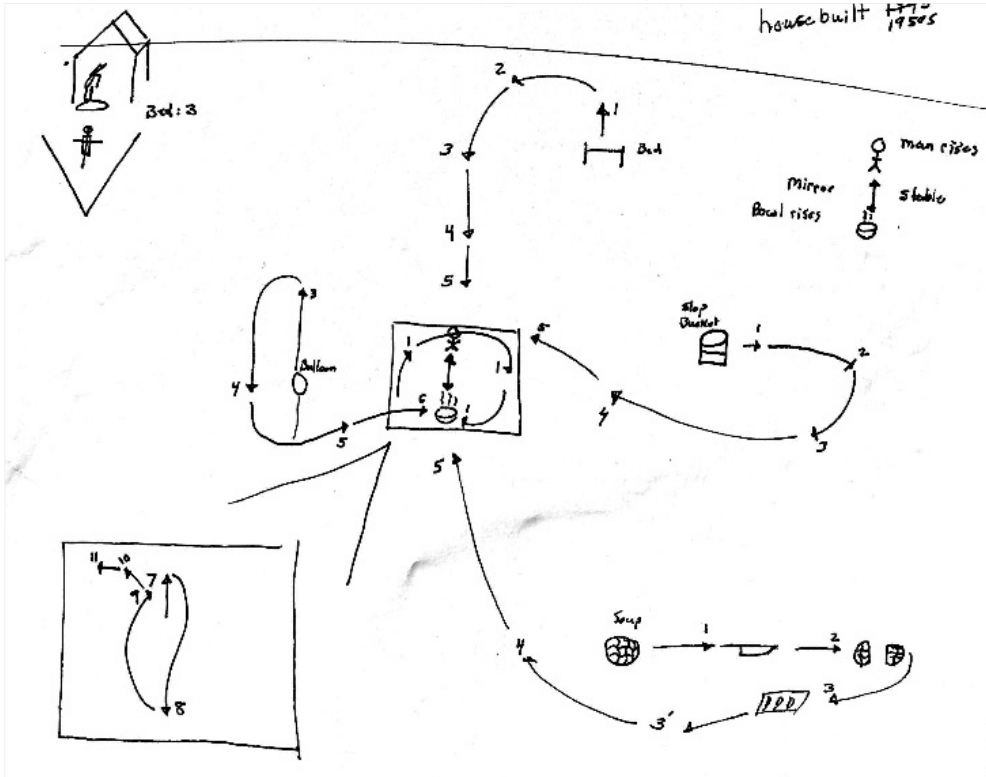


Fig. 2. The above figure, most simply, is fascinated with the center square (where the prisoner has been this whole time). The narrative diagram shows four consecutive stories (processes) step-by-step converging onto the central square. They are the stories of how: how the bed come to be in the cell, how the cabbage soup gets into the bowl, how the balloon rises then falls to the soup, how the slop bucket arrives. These objects are in their own ways, the story of the prisoner's physical, psychological, and spiritual state. The vortex of arrows around the central stick figure is the temptation at work. From the central square, you will notice a "V" and a further square. This square is the movement of Satan within the cell. You will also notice an architectural structure in the upper-left-hand corner. This is a prospective shot of the prisoner on his bed in Piata Unirii in front of St. Michael's Church. The shot was not taken. Some say temptation is like spinning out of control. The diagram shows this much.

PRODUCTION PHOTOS



FILM PRODUCTION DIAGRAM



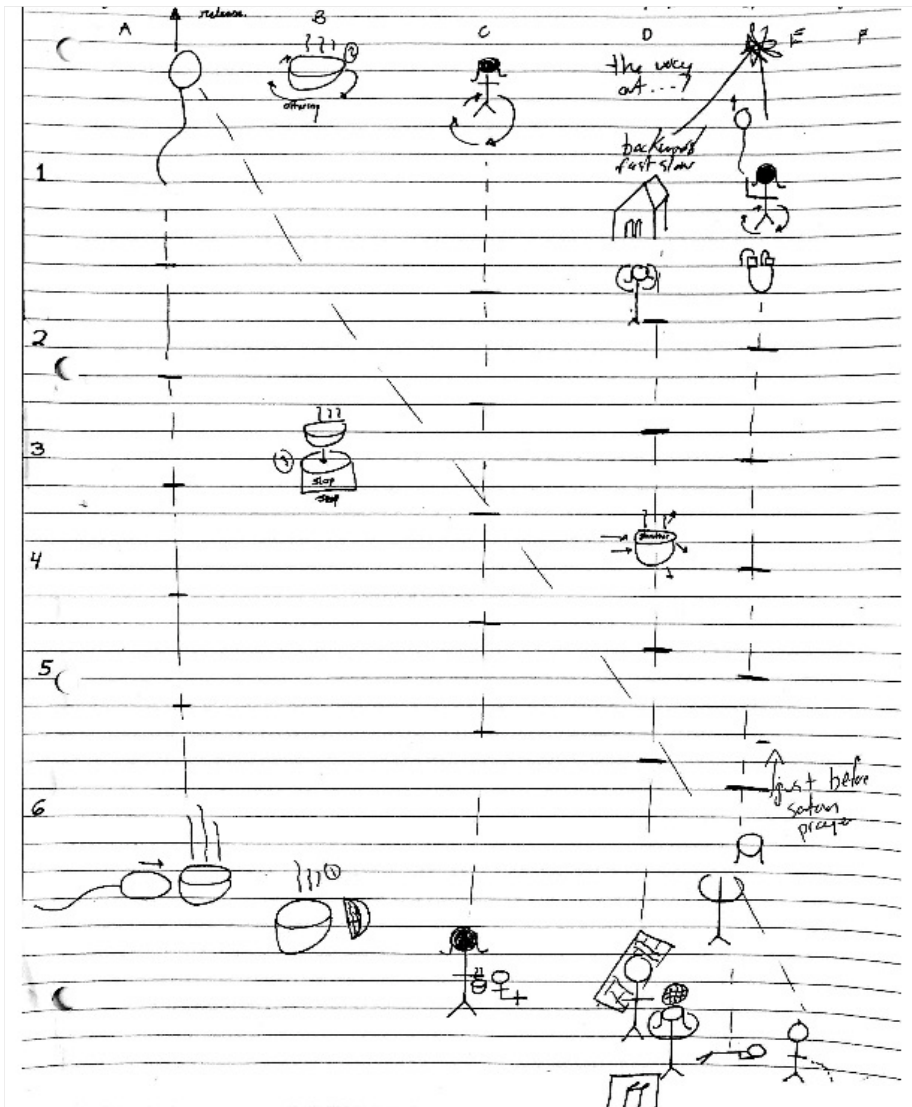


Fig. 3. The above figure diagrams the images from the *Bed Project* film shoot into rows (A-F) and columns (1-6) in order to create a coding schema for ease of scene integration and redistribution. The story begins with the rise of the red balloon (pride) and ends with the prisoner urinating on all he's done (destruction). The diagram moves from top to bottom (e.g. A.1 – A.6), then back to top (e.g. B.1 – B.6). The idea is to easily create distinguishable units from which human psychology can more easily be broken down, reshuffled, become less linear and thus, more real.

EQUIPMENT

Props: a bowl with cabbage soup steaming; short, thin, white, skinny, blanket; torn, beige, baggy pants; two gray slop buckets; an iron bed frame; Bluetooth Dr. Dre Beats headphones; 6 inflated red balloons, with and without helium; clay statue of a little girl

Camera: Canon C300 MK II w/ Canon 35mm 1.4 lens

CREDITS

The Bed Project was first produced by Trent Sanders, William Tyner, Eva Morgenstern, and Rachel Sanders in the courtyard of the Faculty of Theatre and Television, Babeş-Bolyai University on the 12th & 13th of April 2019.

Concept: Trent Sanders & William Tyner

Director & Writer: Trent Sanders

Cinematography: William Tyner and Trent Sanders

Set Design: Trent Sanders

Choreography: Eva Morgenstern & Trent Sanders

Performers: *Prisoner*, Trent Sanders; *Satan Dancing*, Eva Morgenstern; *Satan's Voice*, Rachel Sanders

