

After the shooting period the editor made a first rough cut of the movie on his own only guided by the script and some general discussions with the directors. This first rough cut was 2 hrs 40 min long. (the final film is near to an hour shorter) Below follows the director's reactions to the first rough cut

London/Amsterdam 22 april 2015

Ok Antonio below some notes *please take them as a guidance not as a verdict, use them, abuse them and let them broaden your thinking instead of limiting the possibilities.*

Sc 1/2 – opening scenes

The original plan was to not see Arthur and Vida together until they emerge on the rooftop sc 4 where they're still partially disguised in their weird outfits.

The underlying thought was that they were still hiding their souls towards each other and the audience's journey was piggy bagging on their journey.

The rave material does not support the above thought. We see them –I think—quite clearly and very often together.

We should investigate your suggestion to 'mix' the intro shots of awakening London, the pigeons, the skin details and the rave, while hearing the voice-overs apres l'amour. The script –at the moment—does not challenge time concept, all is linear, but that shouldn't stop us from trying.

Sc 4 – Rooftop

The intention is to capture that short moment in love where you don't want to see each others demons yet, where the adrenaline rush of believing love is possible still rules. Goofing is the expression of that belief. But there wasn't a sunrise to be found in the whole of Europe that morning. Hopefully grading will bring light.

Sc 7/9 – Berliner House

The dramatic backbone is that Arthur is a fish out-of-water. He doesn't belong here and in a subtle way the Berliner family is ganging up against him.

Our original plan was to completely play it on Arthur, only his close up and let everything happen around him, mostly out-of-frame. We choose to isolate him during the shot – instead of being isolated from the beginning.

Isolating one person in a family scene is an approach we do more often. We feel –and hopefully the material supports this—that a character gets more value if we don't cut away all the time, but just focus on that one person – their reaction, looks, body language is more important than the dialogue or seeing the other people. We play sc 9 for instance mostly on Ethel.

Sc 11 – Shopping Street

Our plan was to be very casual in style, almost make it look like a tv walk&talk, but the twist would be that the camera independently lets Arthur and Vida pass and then suddenly follows them in a non-logical way – so we hear the most devastating story about the nazi concentration camp on their backs. And then concentrate on the shop window while the two walk out and come back in.

Emily and I were not happy with the execution on set (camera wise) Perhaps one take – last one—works. But to be safe we covered the scene from other angles also.

Sc 15 – Dancing in Loft

While shooting this, tears sprang to my eyes. The actors (Johnny and Lydia) were so bloody vulnerable and generous to make a fool out of themselves. It is intended to jump cut, it's ok if it looks like they dance for an hour, it's ok if it looks like they've taken drugs, as long as it looks like they have an urge and a desire to create their own little –protected—world. The last lines -her fear to meet his family- are of course the crux of the scene.

We used out of copyright music. We can look later if we want to use Johnny music collage (though generally the original always works best)

Sc 16/18 – Davies House

This is the counterpart of the Berliner House, Vida is the fish-out-of-water trying to blend in, but totally out of place. That's the reason why we concentrate on her at the table while others around her chatter away.

Sc 19 – Pub Port Talbot

Just like Ethel in sc 9 we now concentrate on George – and his loneliness. Personally I don't mind if the dialogue between Arthur, Llion and the pub friend remains background. George's sad face has so much more to offer.

Sc 20 – Backyard House Davies

The scene was designed to hide the two women behind the washing as much as possible. Normally the cutting would go for them peeping around and looking at each other, it is worthwhile to investigate what happens if we do not see them –or barely— (unless it becomes contrived)

Sc 23/24 – Beach

The intention was to make it a light scene, a situation of liberation. Arthur choose to leave the house in the middle of the night, and in doing so showed more loyalty to Vida's feelings then towards his parents. That is cause for joy on the beach. But we had a sick actress (and a wobbly cameraman) so perhaps the scene comes across more heavy handed then intended.

The scene in the car does have the lightness (I hope)

Sc 26/28 – New Life/Old habits

Without it becoming a collage sequence, these scenes do have the purpose to bring in the feeling that the blind rush of lust and love is over. Now they have to deal with each other's habits: Vida becoming a bit manipulative, Arthur shelters his emotions. We also have the footage of the camera Vida uses in bathroom and while hanging the metal frame.

(we omitted sc 29/30 didn't have time and it felt the intentions were covered in the next scenes anyway)

Sc 31 - Peanut butter

The culmination of the previous scene lies here. The peanut butter crash is a symbol of who will rule. It is shot to be messy, chaotic. The editing can be disjointed, not necessarily in perfect continuity (particularly the beginning), Cassavetes style.

Sc 31A – Both at work in Loft

This scene even goes a step further, flat out confrontation, the more angry the better. And we also have the footage on the little camera Arthur made of Llion in the Pub (it may fit better here than in the Pub). The climax of course is the fucking under the sheets. That should be steamy –we may need to boost it with extra sound, the actors were quite shy on set-- . It probably will be a big laugh (I hope so) only because it has truth, not because it is gimmicky.

Sc 32/32A -- Gallery

Arthur should feel left out in a world that's not his.

Sc 33/33A – Bedroom Loft/Bathroom

It is Vida's way of making up, but she should genuinely be surprised and be touched by Arthur masturbating and ejaculating in the bathroom.

Sc 34 – Ritz Hotel

I know Emily is not a fan of this scene but I think their drunkenness works quite well. It can be done as a 'chopped' scene, the editing being as drunk as they are, with as much fun as they have. No normal chronological logic is needed.

sc 36/43 Rooftop

Quite a challenging scene. No normal flow, but snippets of moments with a 'normal' progression – intro, chatting, vows, games and climax. But each segment has a slightly different stylistic approach. Sometimes imitation documentary in a Casavetes / Robert Altman style

The parents for instance are uncomfortable with each other, shot in a way that 'bad' editing is possible, clashes of shots, certainly not the person who talks should always be seen, restless pans.

Other moments it lingers on Llion while he's the only one not talking. We have to use Ethel in the bathroom at the moment where we need a counterpoint for instance during the tuba.

The vows we also have mobile takes from Brenda, Emily and Sara (Emily has the material) and possibly (?) some dancing on the prop camera that Arthur used.

The scene can be done in many ways, the main intention of course is that you start to feel that these two families really don't fit – though they should never talk about it. It has to creep in without anyone even thinking about it.

sc 44 – Hospital

It is the intention to oppose Arthur against his family. He and his father are both hidden (their faces) when they have their confrontation.

sc 49 – Berliner House after Ethel's death

The wandering pan across the room was a major disappointment for Emily and me. Perhaps we can reframe and make the move more casual, not searching, just passing and touching on objects without feeling them.

We have to be careful with Helen – Levi is actually very good, but Helen steers the scene. I think we should see him covering the mirror again in the same shot as where Helen uncovers it.

sc 52 – Hotel room

This scene can also lend itself to a total different approach, disjointed, jumping back and forth. Helen standing, laying down, standing again, Vida rushing out, standing again. Or it can just be a long and silent take. Great scene to try opposites.

sc 56/56A – Coffin out of bedroom

It won't be easy to find the right balance. We can't play on the joke, at the same time it will be funny. And it should be funny because it is so real and true. And just as sudden the entire mood swings back again from hilarious to grim when Brenda makes the remark to Llion about his own father.

Not sure if scene should continue after breaking the window

sc 58 – Beach

I believe that from the first second in the scene Vida knows that Arthur won't come back with her. She's fighting against desperation.

The scene as is already works but we have to give the characters more emotional turmoil – probably by not using the close ups all the time—It’s the kind of scene where if Vida repeats herself –and therefore we ignore continuity issues, let her jump in position—it may actually emphasize her desperation.

It’s typically a scene where you cut when you feel there is an emotional change in the character. Every cut, regardless if it is closer or wider, signals –subconsciously—to the audience that the character struggles at that specific moment.

It’s a scene where we either –I think—go for the story logic, which implies avoid possible distracting continuity mistakes. Or we go for the emotional logic where continuity mistakes in position are emphasized and get a function. Really not sure what is better.

sc 59 – Ethel’s memories

Concept of scene was rather different, but time made it impossible.

We wanted to flow between the people, turn 360 degrees and frame each person in a way that the background became more important than the person.

Well 360 degrees and off-beat framing were not in the cards.

The only poetry that may still be possible is to make it a very ‘fluid’ scene, cross fading hands with faces in an imperfect way (I mean the last part of a face just disappearing out of frame – or hands panning in the wrong direction).

sc 60 – George’s memories

This was conceived as ‘snapshots’ . The memory fades up, the person in background and his/her dialogue are secondary in importance, and memory fades out. No lingering on the people, the focus is on the items.

And then the plastic bag with Ron’s hair moves continuous from one shot to the next as a rondo.

sc 61/62 – Arthur and Vida separated

The two scenes with dialogue should –or could—be embedded in the 2nd unit shots we made of Arthur alone in Port Talbot and Vida walking through crowded London. It is a scene where a Johnny song could provide the mood and the drama.

sc 63/63A – Levi visits Sara

It is an unusual situation and an unusual offer that Levi brings to Sara. We tried to make shots to emphasize that their feelings are out of place –particularly Sara--.

In a way it can be a stiff scene, give each shot its value, no quick cutting, but allow the strangeness to be seen (unless it becomes self indulgent)

sc 65/67 – Vida and Arthur modern communication

This is a bit of a puzzle to make it work, but don't forget we also have the extra material. Emily made a shot of Arthur in shed on her mobile (I think). And I remember we wanted to make Vida filming herself walking through the loft during conversation – but not sure if we ever got to it.

We did have Johnny filming his 'bruises' scenes on Vida's camera. The third take in the park seemed the best and we can use that independently from the laptops or camera also.

sc 68 – memorial

The intention was that the camera reflected the urge of Arthur and Vida to want to come together, but all the time they're interrupted. When they're interrupted the camera moves on as a magnet to the other person, either Vida or Arthur, and catches their glimpses. There should always be this searching movement.

And all in one take. Well, that was the plan. We got very close. Perhaps we need a wipe of a passer-by, to help us from one take into another without really seeing it – because the continuity of movement (the avoidance of cuts) does support the intention.

We've made some backup shots of just moving through the crowd. I'm not a big fan to use those in this scene as it will undermine the intention. The story is not about visitors to the memorial, that's a documentary, the story is about Arthur and Vida wanting to get back together and not knowing how to do it.

sc 71 – Levi and Sara on couch

As much as I dislike the people during Vida and Arthur's 'dance' in sc 68, there could be a possibility to use some in this scene. All those different people talking and engaging, and hidden between them Levi and Sara talking about the feelings of life and death, more and more focussed.

It's worth a try to see if it will give an extra dimension to their interaction.

sc 72 – Fight in urinals

It's the kind of scene where you have to get the feeling we (the audience) are almost accidentally present. If camera goes out of focus, or pans the wrong way, that is not necessarily wrong (unless it draws too much attention to itself)

I think we should not know if Llion beats up Adam or not, which I think means he should after Arthur leaves just look at Adam but not step towards him.

sc 73 – Arthur and Vida almost hook up.

They search for each other's soul. Does he still love me, does she still want me? That's why the searching shots are playing at a corner of the frame.

We want that total intimacy but also need to tell the presence of Llion (I think)

I fear we don't have a good shot of Helen interrupting them, while we need to break up the embrace and get them all to the toilets to the beaten up Adam.

We made a few shots of paintings as a possible start of the scene, or intercut (though I can't imagine we want to cut away from Arthur and Vida) The idea was that they're being watched by the universe, and the paintings are the symbol of the dead people.

sc 77A – Arthur finally saying I Love You

The framing of the wide shot had an overwhelming power during the shooting. Left the hallway, the exit for Arthur, the end of the relationship, right the kitchen apartment, their life together. There was a take (probably first) which was devastatingly beautiful, but it had someone reflected in the piano – or the ever present boom shadow. Hopefully we can salvage it.

We tried to do something special with Arthur and Vida standing opposite by zooming in and tracking out at the same time, changing perspective – as their emotions change. We've done those movements in different order for Arthur and Vida (one zoom in/track out, the other zoom out/track in) It should give a subconscious feeling in the audience their stomach. No idea if it will work or just staying in the wide is better.

sc 77B – dancing

This also touched me tremendously during shooting. (and then sound infuriated me by their constant bickering and ruining the concentration of the actors). If there is not one take that is usable from start to finish, it really is possible that time lapse/cross fade creates the intimacy we hope for.

The film references are not the same as in the script but more updated. (did you get the new pages also?)

sc 78 Rooftop in the rain

I love the take where it starts to rain. To me it has iconic value. Their love is beyond the influence of the world, and at the same time it is not the prince on the white horse anymore, nor the princess with the tiara – they have become adults in accepting reality and forgive themselves for their personalities – so much a reflection of all around them.

It is very tempting to let the shot go on—but it should stop after the spitting of the ice, and then indeed continue after the appropriate pause in voice over during the credits.