

This document was written about six months before shooting.

It didn't. Although it's done surprisingly well in Europe.

★ **General Philosophy**

I see this as an independent film that will hopefully find fans among people who like smart movies. I'm more concerned about quality (reviews, buzz, word of mouth) than business. If this movie makes \$1 million at the box office, I'll be happy. Awards would be great, but I'm not banking on that. The movie is too odd to connect with most Academy voters, though I hope it would find critical acclaim.

Even at its most accessible, The Nines will probably make more sense on repeat DVD viewing than watching it in a movie theatre. That's okay.

★ **Starting at the End**

For The Nines, here's where I want to finish:

We ended up being a Premiere, rather than in competition. Not really an important difference for us.

We ended up with multiple buyers: Sony/Newmarket for North America, and GreeneStreet (a sales agency) for international.

All accurate.

We used a small HD suite at LaserPacific, with a few hours on the big screen for last tweaks.

We never had to re-mix. We kept the same music through re-release.

1. Sundance Film Festival

▶ Goal: I want the movie to be in competition at the 2007 festival, and to sell with multiple bidders. What we show should look great.

▶ Picture: I think we will be projecting HD (probably HD-CAM). Visual FX will be rendered to this resolution (as opposed to 2K). We won't be going back to negative for the sections that were shot on film. We'll do DI color correction on a system like Final Touch.

▶ Sound: We'll want to do a very good mix that could stand as the final mix in case we don't get picked up for theatrical distribution. So, any music used should be clear-able not only for festivals, but also for DVD. But in all likelihood, we'll be going back and remixing, if only for new soundtrack music.

2. Theatrical distribution

▶ Goal: Something that looks extremely good. It doesn't need to look like a \$30 million movie, but it shouldn't look like a \$1 million movie either.

We used E-Film, but didn't need to rescan anything.

Never re-rendered VFX, since we stayed at HD resolution.

▶ Picture: Assuming the distributor kicks in the money, full DI color correction at somewhere like eFilm, rescanning the film elements. Visual FX will be re-rendered at appropriate resolution. Presumably, we would strike a negative, and do prints, unless digital distribution makes sense.

▶ Sound: Presumably remixing.

3. DVD

We'll see about the "bajillion," but I'm happy with how the DVD turned out.
We have a lot of special features, many of which are possible only because of stuff we planned for during production.

▶ Goal: Ultimately, I want a great DVD that sells a bajillion copies. This is where I think the movie will really find its audience. We should go into the project anticipating the DVD, and always be looking for things that would make the DVD more of a must-have.

▶ Picture/Sound: Per the distributor, but presumably the best possible transfer based on the theatrical version.

★ Formats

3-perf 35mm.

Part Three will be shot on film, possibly Super-16, but more likely 35mm (either 3 or 4 perf). We'll never cut negative, so it makes sense planning whatever format gives us the most value heading into an HD workflow.

Nope. Shot SD, because HD didn't look enough like video.

Part Two will be shot HD, handheld, largely in less-controllable environments, as it really would be in a reality TV show. I value speed and flexibility over pixel resolution. Quite possibly, the aspect ratio would be smaller than the whole frame, meaning there would be a black border around the picture during part two, like this:



We combined the pull back into the VFX sequence.

Then, at the end of part two, we "pull back" the edges to reveal the videogame symbols that have "always" been lurking underneath the black matte.

Never did this. We shot very standard Super-16.

Part One will be a combination of film (whatever format we choose for Part Three) and HD video, most likely recorded at full resolution directly to computer (or other high-speed array). Film would be shot for everything that's not at the main house. Video would be just the stuff at the house.

Yup. The only night exterior is in the middle of Part One, when Gary meets Noelle at the bus stop. That was part of a reshoot.

Currently, the Gary's drunken roadtrip at the opening is listed as night, but my preference would actually be to do it as daytime, which also works better for film than for video.

★ **Schedule**

My dream schedule would be as follows:

This is pretty much how we did it, except that Part One was all film, and Part Two was SD video.

1. Part Three forest location (film)
2. Part Three remote locations (film)
3. Part Three house (film)
4. Part One opening (film)
5. Part One cutaways during Sarah's song (film)
6. Part One house (very good HD video)
7. Part Two house (lower HD video)
8. Part Two various LA locations (lower HD video)
9. Part Two New York (lower HD video)

★ **Visual Effects**

Currently, I don't think there are any practical effects. I could imagine asking for some (very limited) rain, particularly if the time of year suggests it.

We did some limited fogging on Day One in the forest.

There are several big visual effects moments, and a handful of smaller ones. For the big ones, my current idea is to talk to several commercial FX houses who are eager to start doing feature work, and find one that would do it largely as a reputation-builder. The little ones could possibly be done in-house.

We used LookFX, who mostly handle TV work.

Quite a bit was handled in the Avid. I did one minor thing in Motion.

The Big Ones:

- 78 End of Part One. Falling leaf and nuclear blast.
- 132 End of Part Two: Camera pulls up and back, we see symbols over people's heads, and full videogame controls.
- 155 G. and S. talk as people walk by with symbols over their heads.

173-4 G. leaves this dimension, which peels apart.

By far the most complicated sequence, involving the most steps.

The Little Ones:

- 3 Gary throws the match in extreme slow motion. This scene repeats a few times, and will probably need to be handled as a time-distortion effect, possibly with a CG match.
- 80 Animated titles: Behind the Screen
- 141 Noelle watches video from Part Two. Based on shooting schedule, this is likely a match insert. Arguably, it may make sense to rent a film camera and shoot these as true inserts.
- 143 Same videocamera gag, plus Noelle goes all spline-y.
- 148 Same videocamera gag.
- 152 Repeat of match-throwing from 3.
- 157 Match-holding.
- 176 Mary sees a g in the sky, which becomes a 9.

Things that seem like effects but aren't:

This document was largely prepared for our line producer, who was trying to come up with a budget. If you don't specifically mention something, they're likely to budget extra money for it.

- 11 Gary sees two other versions of himself. Probably just camera angles a la Alanis Morissette "Ironic." I'll storyboard it out.
- 58 Gary bumps into himself Again, likely done editorially rather than an effect.
- 71 The dice. Not an effect, but may need special macro lenses.
- 73 The hopscotch stone. Not an effect; stone is moved while off-camera.
- 76 Circling the nines: Again, may need special macro lenses.
- 77 Little red light: Actually already there. No effect.
- Various Part Two titles and graphics: All