In the Air Tonight: Mediating Infrastructure with *Miami Vice*

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At 11 p.m. eastern time on Wednesday, August 24, 2005, a hurricane warning was issued for the city of Miami, Florida. Katrina made landfall the next evening with winds at 80 mph and dumping 20 in. of rain, spurring tornadoes, a 5.37 ft. storm surge, flooding, and 14 deaths, before it intensified to wreak the destruction in New Orleans for which it is better known. While over Miami, the storm was captured on camera by a Hollywood production crew—working perhaps under some duress, perhaps in some violation of their union contracts—in the dangerous hours after the warning had been declared. The director's push to continue shooting until nearly dawn reportedly angered some of the crew and cast, especially as just a few weeks before, Tropical Storm Dennis had showered the two protagonists in glass from a blown-out building facade as they tried to hook a sequence in a top-down Ferrari. Anger partially dispelled to wrap, but then final shoots entailed persevering through Hurricane Rita in late September—at the time the most powerful tropical cyclone on record in the Gulf of Mexico—as well as overcoming a serious setback when the film's production office was destroyed by Tropical Storm Wilma in October. In a warming climate over the last forty years, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the average number of named storms in the Atlantic has increased slightly, while the severity of individual storms has increased precipitously (NOAA 2021, n.p.). Contriving to produce a $135 million budget, technologically experimental, star-larded movie in hurricane season was not, it seems, temperate.

Miami Vice (2006) vamps this weather. Rather than obstructing the film's diegesis, the storms fulfill it: background becomes foreground, atmosphere engulfs plot, the flow of water and swell of weather liquescing the circulations the film thematizes. Traffic in guns, girls, and goods constitutes the illicit economy the story centers, while traffic in intelligence coordinates the agencies tracking that economy. All this circulation relies on infrastructural conduits, featured lavishly in the film: telecommunications networks, Highway 95, the Miami Canal, the Miami River system,

and the Port of Miami, which is not only one of the largest cargo ports in the United States but also the largest passenger port in the entire world. All the while that the film travels these and other conduits, all the two hours and fourteen minutes in which it makes "transpo" expertise the core conceit of both its criminal and its enforcement operations, all throughout its climaxes on the curve of Highway 95 and in the Bojean Boatyards, the movie's indelible capture of storm season ferries the climate. Infrastructure, Brian Larkin influentially formulates, is "architecture for circulation," those built forms and their interlinking networks that "facilitate the flow" of resources throughout physical and social space (2013, 328). But it is also, *Miami Vice* insists, the climacteric materializations of such architectures, their atmospheric effects, the world of soaking air.

The following pages argue that this insistence consists of the surprising way in which *Miami Vice* shoulders its mantle as the first fully digital Hollywood blockbuster: actualizing digital cinematography not as spectacular derealization but rather as adroit environmental index. *Miami Vice* uses digital image capture's special depth of field and distinct diversity of light to center dark skies, wet clouds, cityscapes, and ecological panoramas, precipitating an unprecedented cinema of climate. Through its atmospheric aesthetic, the circulation infrastructures of shipping and smuggling, vehicles and fuels, become connected to their climacteric effects of haze and humidity, surge and storm. Long before greenlighting and production, Michael Mann's screenplay's first line, a fade-in exposition, avowed, "We are at the delicate interface between ocean and air, liquid and gas, the event horizon where molecules evaporate. This interchange is ethereal" (Hyden 2016; see also *Miami Vice* 2006). Interface and interchange are integral to the movie's aesthetic mediation of the infrastructure, logistics, and trade that constitute its subject matter: the medium of cinema establishes at the level of the shot the very foreground-background relationship that must be centered to understand infrastructure, to understand the causal interconnections of circulation and cyclones. In calibrating cinema to the physical environment, in absorbing conditions of production into its form, *Miami Vice* enacts at the level of medium the insight that infrastructure must be plumbed neither in its functions nor in its nodes but in its effects. Miami is a privileged site for cognizing those effects—indeed one of the most privileged sites in the world—because the port's essential circulatory function corresponds there with its own environmental destruction: it is the only Western city on the list of the world's top ten most vulnerable to coastal flooding today and in the future (see Nicholls et al. 2007). In other words, Miami marks the ultimate site where the causes of the climate crisis coincide with its effects, where Global North capitalist circulation infrastructure reaps what it sows.

By setting its sights on the atmospheric effects of infrastructure, *Miami Vice*'s promotion of hurricanic circulation as a real referent drives dialectically against the famed derealizations of digital cinema. In his groundbreaking "What Is Digital Cinema?," Lev Manovich formidably underlines cinema as "the art of the index," which he contrasts to digital cinema as "no longer an indexical media technology but rather, a sub-genre of painting," one that "can no longer clearly be distinguished from animation" (2023, 1, 3). It has been the consensus among theorists as well as practitioners that the advent of the digital harkens a "post-cinema" phase defined by the loss of indexicality and the gain of interactive virtuality.[1] As David Rodowick summarizes, "[T]he digital image is more and more responsive to our imaginative intentions, and less and less anchored to the prior existence of things and people. . . . [C]inema will increasingly become the art of synthesizing imaginary worlds . . . in which the sight of physical reality becomes increasingly scarce. . . . [T]he digital synthesis produces an image of what never occurred in reality; it is a fully imaginative and intentional artifact" (2007, 86, 159). Mary Ann Doane concords that "confronted with the threat and/or promise of the digital, indexicality as a category . . . has become today the primary indicator of cinematic specificity" (2007, 130). Indexicality loss holds even for those who demur from lamenting the digital divide. André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion, for example, appraise digital's enhancement of the filmmaker's intentions, a capability to "neutralize the semiotic fracture between the script and the film and to reduce the chance elements of filming"; they also avow that "the indexical status of photo-realist images of captured reality (the profilmic) is thus in the process of slipping toward the ambiguity of metaphor, the simulacrum, simulation. . . . [W]ith digital encoding, this essential imprinting, this strong contiguity with captured reality, is lost" (2015, 57–59, 65, 67). The digital medium accommodates more simulation and virtuality, more control and intention, with the side effect of pressing "the disappearance of a photographic ontology of film" (Rodowick 2007, vii), severing film's bond with the pro-filmic.

By the lights of this pervasive conceit of the digital as derealizing, it is quite striking that the first fully digital blockbuster wields digital capacities to the contrary: *Miami Vice* uses digital's hold of light and depth of field to intensify foreground-background relations, to suture rather than sunder the connection to pro-filmic space. Thus, Mann develops digital as peculiarly more indexical than mylar emulsion, more linked to the pro-filmic environmental real. Its project to represent pro-filmic climate exploits the strengths of digital filmmaking while reformalizing the level of shot through an overarching aesthetic of the horizon. *Miami Vice* digitizes hurricane-dark Miami to bring climate into legibility, fathoming the

systematic linkages of boats and clouds, causeways and crests, infrastructure and atmosphere. Feel it coming in the air tonight.

   The specification of the medium in *Miami Vice* as the rendering of atmosphere—this actualization of digital cinema to capture climate—extenuates the film's thematic investigation of transport logistics and social systems in circulation capitalism, proffering through cinematic form a theory of infrastructure as the determinant of climate. Stressing causality in this way counters both the functionalist bias of everyday parlance and the complexity-assemblage bias of many scholarly approaches to infrastructure. That latter bias coheres across scientific, social scientific, and humanist methods that prize isolatable particularities while defining knowledge as qualification and relativization. But infrastructure transcends and connects, and its interpretation necessitates a perspective that looks more wholly. The Miami theory clarifies that a distinction of aesthetic humanities infrastructure studies might be less "imagining otherwise" and more mediating the big picture: form and content, cause and effect, interface, horizon, the simultaneously granular and systematic—in short, dialectics. Crucially, such aesthetic dialectics also offer something rather different from the *metaphorization* of infrastructure lately championed by so many humanists keen to elasticize boring old materiality.[2] Creatively redefining infrastructure as persons, affects, customs, and more, these extrapolations are often compelling and sometimes poetic, but they also proceed riskily in a climate and context in which the urgency of comprehending, appreciating, and reconstructing material frameworks for energy transfer, shipping, and quotidian transportation could not possibly be direr.

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Where infrastructure works—where, more specifically, petro-fueled infrastructure works—storms flow. *Miami Vice* uses digital cinematography to compose intricate horizons that interconnect concrete docks and ethereal atmosphere. Atmosphere aesthetics are tricky to analyze, as recent criticism has educed.[3] A strange amalgam of physics and affect, atmosphere demands interpretation at enveloping scale—collective rather than individual, objective but also subjective, determinative while nonetheless exceeding its components. To think about the atmospheric aesthetic in *Miami Vice*, we can attend to several stylistic and technical aspects, several compositional principles for the shot, that reel to relay the whole. These include the predominance of nightscapes capacitated by digital's hold of light, a stylization of the horizon capacitated by digital's depth of field and aspect ratio, and a poetics of setting that minimizes plot and maximizes stasis, formalizing a fundamental paradox of infrastructure:

facilitating flow (of persons, goods, and natural resources like water or oil), it must itself be sustainedly static—a stasis that again directs our theorizing not to potential but to causes. Let's consider these aspects in turn.

The barometering of atmospheric conditions on set in hurricane-season Miami shines through Mann's special nightscape technique. Shooting on a Viper involved slower speed and wider shutter angles than other digital options, and composite focus sweeps in postproduction offered an excessive depth of field. At depth and width like that Mann could experiment with minimal artificial lighting in a novel exterior night shooting that engaged nocturnality itself as multidimensional; the dark is not an absence of light but a complex layering of colors—storms packing their uncanny purples or greens—not the lack of horizon but its shadowy volume. Digital makes all this possible, as the cinematographer Dione Beebe explains: "The format is different from film. It's a different result. Because you're seeing a night world that is richly illuminated, with an enormous amount of depth, it's slightly unsettling. It feels almost otherworldly" (Frazer 2004, n.p.).

The unsettling otherworldly nocturnal interface of ocean and air seals an utterly different tonality than the TV show it remediates. In particular, in the opening twenty minutes, the dark of night, the dark of storm, and a dark fashion palette decidedly puncture expectations that the film will amp the glam of the TV show's coral and turquoise blazers-n-sunsets. A nocturnal aura governs, with digital's expansive dark exteriors inlaying both foreground and background, faces in detail and humidity on the skyscraper-strewn horizon. This fascination with the manifold light within darkness characterizes the first shot. At the beginning, eliding black screens, credit sequences, and title slides, a smash cut opens on a dance floor, a dark undulating figure in neon silhouette, and then cuts to a second dark profile in the dark club, contrastingly still, the set of the chin and sobriety of expression impressing: it's not all fun and games. As the camera reverses from that second profile, it encompasses two other set chins and then pans the crowd for more; this is a big operation in a small club. An unceremonious cut to an empty couch shot at the angle of a security camera suggests that the sober watchers have tech support, and then the housing of that footage appears as a personal portable screen hacked into a power line outside the club, before the screen is snapped shut by a cameoing Justin Theroux up on a rooftop, framed obliquely against a surreal purple sky. Through these layers of gaze and surveillance and screen, the underway sting operation comes into some intelligibility—but within a minute it is suspended, never to be resumed. It is an opening that opposes the main attraction dancing girl in the foreground to the quotidian observers in the background and suspends the spectator in the middle distance. The film both begins and ends in medias

Fig. 1. Purple horizon.

res, a flex of non-exposition and non-resolution that leaves the spectator to forge connections and deflects from the narrative while elevating the setting.

The deep setting with a foregrounded background is underscored by the repetition of the rooftop purple sky–Theroux shot just a few minutes later, when Colin Ferrell and Jamie Foxx take a phone call against the purple, pink, and red of the skyline—buildings on the deep line in focus at the same time as the actors' faces (Figure 1). The foreground-background image echoes the content of the phone call, a check-in with the Federal Bureau of Investigation that requires a series of code words: the face embedded in the horizon, the local medias-res operation embedded in the federal enforcement network. And then for a third time within the same opening sequence, at the fifteen-minute mark, men stand on a rooftop at night against the city wall, this time to coordinate a new inter-agency affair. Sonny and Rico are headed undercover, and it is all conceived under cover of night, amid all the manifold ways darkness is still light in the digital nocturne.

When at last sunlight shines on screen, at twenty minutes in, the established technical facility for nightscapes has consummated its thematic significance—the new undercover project has been arrayed and Sonny is ready for the light of day—and the movie is ready to embed its digital hold of light in a broader aesthetic of the horizon. For the first minute of daylight, the sky only appears in glimpses and through glass—the windshield of the Crockett mobile and the windows of an informant's condo. Then at 21:21, it takes the screen astoundingly. With special exposure settings and unique color timing, Sonny appears far off-center against a view of impossible dimensionality—hypersaturated color, fifty shades of blue, white caps waving and white clouds wafting, white hubs of faraway

Fig. 2. Blue horizon.

planes sailing the low sky (Figure 2). Here at last is the bright palette we expect from *Miami Vice*. The original TV show, produced by Mann, was one of the more serious and artsy dramas in the history of the medium to date, downplaying action and dialogue for music (the inflection of MTV) and for cinematography more characteristic of the silver screen than the small. While the show's overall style of glamorous fashion and sunset colors is starkly absent from the filmic remediation's darkness, both share the aesthetic commitment to atmosphere. The style contrasts and genre destabilization between the two instantiations highlight the divergence between 1986 Miami and 2006 Miami, a change that whirls on atmosphere. Stormy black skies instead of clarion blue: this is no mere attitudinal shift but the surge in frequency and intensity of tropical storms, in the severity of breakers and flooding, in the deniability and inevitability of where things stand—or, rather, sink—in southern Florida.

The film eventually marks this present preternaturalness of climate change by conspicuously using the hurricane forecast as a hostage's proof of life: "Developing news in weather today. There's new activity in the tropics. . . . Coincidentally three years ago today, July 24th, that's when Hurricane Danny formed out across the Atlantic Basin. And now we have our own tropical troubles as Hurricane Ernesto, a category—" This sequence is odd within the rest of the movie's vernacular, rife with other moments at which "proof" is instantiated in the visual rather than aural register (surveillance footage monitored and replayed on handheld and portable devices is a crucial driver of the action, including the initial sting operation; Rico convincing the FBI that go-fast boats are their in; Yero proving to Jesus that Isabella is in too deep with Sonny; the ultimate destruction of the hostage-takers' trailer). The regular significance accorded to the easy circulability of video throughout this story (though a

year before the iPhone revolutionized video transfer) italicizes the sound-proofing of the weather. The hurricane is there even when you can't see it.

Looming in the thick and textured background, the climate seeps palpably throughout thanks to the movie's superwide 2.37:1 aspect, digital's special depth of field, Mann's compositional principle of negative space, and the frequent use of a still camera. The digital's hold of lush foreground against crisp background animates the movie's many environmental establishing shots—where the water meets the weather, where the rainforest is punctured by vehicles, where the go-fast boats lap the tankers. In these horizons, ostensible subjects like actors or vehicles shuttle to the margins so that asymmetry prevails and negative space leads, with atmosphere itself diffusely centered. Although Mann's contemporaries in adopting digital cinematography (like Kathryn Bigelow and Steven Soderbergh) often evangelized its kinetic flexibility and its immanentization into corporeal phenomenality,[4] Mann, by contrast, operates the digital to maximize stillness and expanse; rather than recess the camera and perspective into a human scale, Mann strives for ever greater scope. Through all these principles, in extreme wide after extreme wide, crescendo after crescendo, *Miami Vice* activates a mediation of the horizon that elevates contextualization and spatial integration: what is out there on the horizon imbricates with what is right here in the moment, the cumulating clouds charged by the voracious, calculating, professional, romantic fuel consumers.

The commitment to the horizontal is again a site of *Miami Vice*'s unusual specification of the digital. Contemporary video aesthetics are often, Mary Ann Doane notes, associated with "'vertical perspective.' Drones, surveillance cameras, military aerial photography, and the zooming and floating vision facilitated by Google Earth obliterate the power of the horizon in vertical perspective and situate the spectator in an unstable place—suspended, hovering" (2022, 19). Here, by contrast, Mann devises a visual language syntaxed by horizon shots from a grounded or human perspective and individual shots whose composition is dramatically horizontal even when the horizon itself does not feature. In numerous sequences involving windows and rooftops and porticos, the film borrows the horizontal affordances of architectural technologies to organize its perspectival interest in the metonymic linking of spaces. Horizontality poses questions of structuration and of the beyond of structure, of the built form and planned environment as well as the sublime surround.

The infrastructural sensitivities of this horizontality redound in some of the film's other aesthetic idiosyncrasies, such as its indifference to plot and genre. Setting and environment are instead paramount. Indeed, the technique of plotting could be considered primarily contextual,

presenting a fairly elaborate mesh within which few actual events ultimately transpire. An expansive and opaque network of cooperating and competing agencies (Miami PD, FBI, DEA, ATF, and ICE) and an equally internecine and omnipotent network of crime and shipping (crisscrossing Cuba, Haiti, Paraguay, Colombia, and more; first the traffic in women and then the traffic in drugs) occasion the undercover operation. Crockett and Tubbs pose as "transpo experts" to smooth the logistics of a transnational cartel, the motif of "undercover" punning on infrastructure's denoted "beneath" and tricky invisibility. Common to the good guys and the bad guys, the underground and the aboveboard, are not just transportation and logistics largesse but telecommunications and surveillance infrastructure. Cell phones and video surveillance, radio antennae and fax machines, jets and convertibles and "go-fast boats"—watercraft designed to evade radar detection, in use since the Prohibition era—and their illicit, inefficient, excessive use that begets more use generate the air we breathe. Space opens for this critical insight through the recurrent composition of the movie's most majestic horizons upon the scheme of transportation: a go-fast boat running to Cuba, a container ship crossing from the Dominican Republic, a private jet jaunting to Haiti and Miami, and a radar-ducking double jet prowling from Colombia all spur the movie to its widest frames, brightest exposures, and profoundest blues. The gorgeous improbable horizon hosts the intercourse of transpo and atmosphere, carbon and current.

The awesome preference for vistas of the horizon accrues as an augmenting of milieu beyond act. After presenting the trappings of the plot, any kind of arc of event or conflict-to-resolution is foregone. The story commences with a sting operation against human traffickers but never returns to those bad actors. It charts an international network of right-wing paramilitary types, from the Aryan Brotherhood in the US South to oligarchs in the Paraguayan rainforest, but makes nothing of these unholy alignments. And it detects the lethal effects of a mole pinpointed in the DC headquarters of the FBI but never comes around to consequences. These irresolutions laminate upon the dizzying, liturgical acronyms of the many gangs, criminal syndicates, and enforcement agencies to relay sheer networktivity, the abiding operations of circulation industries and of the information industries that secure them.

Networktivity orients multiple cruxes of the movie, including the first post-op launch meet between Sonny and Rico and the FBI and Miami-Dade Police at the port among the container ships and cargo cranes. In the exchange, Rico chastises Agent Fujima for "bad intel":

> RICO: "José Yero, cocaine producer? Yero's middle management. Part of a bigger, transnational operation, run by Arcangel de Jesus Montoya."

SONNY: "Montoya's the new news. Globalized."

FUJIMA: "Moving?"

RICO: "Colombian coke and H, arms from the Ukraine, E from Holland, pirated software from China to Brazil."

Even when standing on the docks of the world's largest port, the clueless FBI misapprehends circulators as producers. Its "bad intel" mistakes diversified integrated trafficking as single-stream kings and the flexible moguls of one of the world's largest tax-free zones (Ciudad del Este, at the triborder of Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina) as merely local yokels. The undercover operation can reveal not only this complex circulatory apparatus but also its guts in quotidian infrastructure: "We're seeing their ops. Transpo. You know money-laundering networks. It would take years to put together a deal like this. We want to stay under. . . . [W]e illuminate Montoya's operations from the inside. No one has ever tread before where we are now."

Sonny's revelatory tautology "the new news" belongs to a grammar of repetition, chiasmus, and circular reasoning so consistent throughout the film—and so torquing of its dialogue—as to demand explanation. Circulation and cyclones reverberate through these formulations, infrastructure-become-climate-become-syntax:

"Why do I get the feeling everybody knows we're here 15 blocks out?"

"Cuz everybody knows we're here 15 blocks out."

"How do we discuss this on an open phone line?"

"He called us on an open phone line."

"It can come back on me, baby."

"It can't come back on you, baby."

"We didn't come down here to audition for business. Business auditions for us."

"Maybe this don't work."

"Then it don't work."

"Ships move. That's why they call them ships."

Repetitions recycle: "You can't do time, don't mess with crime" becomes minutes later "They didn't do times with us, they ain't doing crimes with us." "I ain't playing," Rico's repeating of Trudy's devotion to her job, returns as "I ain't playing," Sonny's affirmation of his devotion
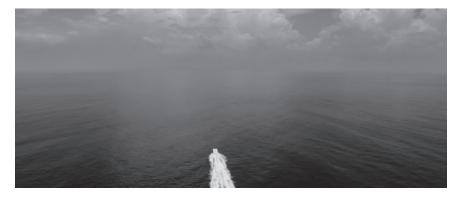
Fig. 3. Boat horizon.

to Montoya's consort Isabella (Gong Li). A visual Chekhov gun goes off: the threat "They gonna look around and go, 'Ola Hijo. That's some crazy motherfucking wallpaper, what is that? Jackson Pollock? No, vireo. That was José Yero. Got splattered all over his own wall" in Yero's first scene becomes the promise consummated in his last, splatter-shot against the wall. And a star of the original series as well as of its soundtrack (the Eagles' Glenn Frey) rematerializes as extravagant callback dialogue: "let's take it to the limit one more time." In these strange locutions, what goes around comes around; infrastructure for circulation bites back in rain.

If these aesthetics of circulation and horizontality illustrate that humanities approaches to infrastructure might effectively prioritize the wholistic or even dialectical forte of art in mediating the social ecology of circulatory systems in their actuality rather than their metaphoricity, then it is worth pointing out in turn how such a method allows us to read the wholeness of aesthetic objects themselves. Like the cyclonic dialogue, another initial oddity of *Miami Vice*—its indifference to the rules of the crime genre, its romantic interlude of over twelve minutes at the core of the film—makes sense as part of its infrastructure thinking. Sonny and Isabella frolic in Cuba, in 2006 as yet embargoed. He invites her for a drink, she asks what he likes to drink, "I'm a fiend for mojitos" rolls out as one the film's most memeable moments, and they're off, undaunted by the hurdle of US-Cuba barriers ("They won't like my passport," Sonny worries. "It's okay. The harbormaster is my cousin," Isabella buoys). Upon his departure Sonny unreassuringly assures Rico, "I know what I'm doing," and as the go-fast boat soars through the waves in the film's most sumptuous cerulean sequence (Figure 3), Isabella similarly demarks their exit from the normal sectors of professionalism: Sonny inquires, "You do business in Cuba with your husband?" to which she replies, "I never

do business in Cuba. And Jesus is not my husband. I'm a businesswoman. I do not need a husband." Outside ordinary international relations, outside ordinary business proceedings, outside ordinary identities, outside the genre of the procedural crime thriller, the tryst is mutually acknowledged as outside all logic ("this is a bad idea," "this is past a bad idea"), and this outsideness of Cuba signals its political economic externality to the ordinary cycle of capitalist circulation and capitalist climate.

The possibility that this outside could constitute not merely a zone of exception but rather an alternate world system stems from Isabella's Chineseness and her references to her family's control of traffic in the harbor and facility with languages—her mother was a translator, and the camera lingers over several photographs that establish the history of her greatness from the Iglesia y Academia China de la Habana to glamorous state galas, an entire realm of linguistic, spiritual, intellectual, and political exchange not governed by "business." Cuba as a romantic antipode, forcibly cut off from capitalist circulation, figures on screen as a realm of retro logos and vintage cars and functions diegetically to expand the sense of totality the film gives us to think. When Sonny returns, Rico appraises, "There's undercover and then there is which way is up"—*Miami Vice* concerns the disorientations incurred in accounting the whole, the estrangements entailed in tracking the atmospheric disturbances of capitalist circulation while eyeing the horizon where another social circuit is possible.

Punctuating this externality that dialectically synthesizes the movie's circulation theory is the closing sequence, which offers no conclusion of the initial or any other investigation. Crockett escorts a handcuffed Isabella across a bridge to a small house on a small key, where they await the outcome of a raid on Jesus's home in Colombia. Upon word that Jesus has eluded arrest, Isabella departs by boat, bound perhaps for Cuba and perhaps for some other escape hatch of history. The camera frames Sonny against the purple twilight horizon, a visual rhyme not only with the opening shot of Theroux but also, in the vein of the core reticulation of environment, with the swaying palms (Figure 4); here in the closing tableau rests an ultimate conceptual justification for a style choice that has besmirched the film since the first scene: Crockett's outrageous mullet. Every single thing in the film builds to this one shot, Mogwai's devastating "Auto Rock" ebbing, the core piano riff a citation of the original series' "Crockett's Theme," all melodies concentric like the wind, Florida Keys resound.

The mullet climax is yet further accentuated by repetition: cut to Rico and Trudy in the hospital after the kidnapping, and then return to the same twilight-luminous, horizon-lush, asymmetrically composed hairdo swaying in the hurricane-bent palms. Even with all that coiffure charisma realized, the film finds itself unable to go out on such a surge. Instead,

Fig. 4. Mullet rhyme.

the camera watches Crockett get into his car and drive away through the trees, winding, and then cuts to him walking toward an unmarked door whose florescent lights and scrubbed surrounders indicate the hospital where Tubbs sits with Trudy. Here in this final frame are the first traces of the signature South Beach hues that so decidedly defined the television show: aqua and coral, prominently defining the concluding image neither via fashion nor as sunscape but in infrastructure—the exterior walls of a hospital building, the glinty metal of a large shipping vehicle. Investigations do not resolve, bad guys get away, loved ones slip away, and what abides are the trees and the vehicles, healthcare and pink, the sky and the covers. No triumph, only ongoingness; no justice, only the interlinking systems of social reproduction and ecology, "the delicate interface" of infrastructure and atmosphere. Not at the beginning but at the end, finally the fade to black and the title screen, blue neon block caps: Miami Vice.

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Practicing digital indexing to conceptualize circulation as the project of infrastructure and turbulent atmosphere as its effect, *Miami Vice* focuses the causes of the ecocide. Contra a certain historicization that disjoins Keynesian hard infrastructures (bridges) from neoliberal digitality (networks), as well as counter to the paradigm in which digital media primarily obfuscate their own ecological externalities like lithium mining for camera batteries and hydrocooling for server farms, the first digital blockbuster tenders the thought that circulation-centric capitalism humidifies the dark sky. Mediating infrastructure demands thinking

at scale, a demand aesthetic forms uniquely answer, even though aesthetic humanists too often favor the partial or micrological and too often approach infrastructure studies as an occasion to romanticize the local and enthuse dismantling. Seeing at scale, *Miami Vice*'s mediation holistically theorizes the interface of transpo and horizon: moving goods, moving cyclones, moving mullets, moving images, all the bright lights faded to blue.[5]

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Notes

1. For example, *Post-Cinema: Theorizing 21st-Century Film*, edited by Shane Denson and Julia Leyda, conceives post-cinema as a historical category that marks cinema's prolongation and complication as "essentially digital, interactive, networked, ludic, miniaturized, mobile, social, processual, algorithmic, aggregative, environmental, or convergent" (2016, 1).

2. For two of the most prominent examples, see Berlant (2022) and Rich, Rizzuto, and Zieger (2022).

3. See, for example, Zhang (2018), Böhme (2017), and Taylor (2016). For more discussion of this critical trend, see Kornbluh (2019–20).

4. This is, for example, the enthusiasm of the laureled directors Steven Soderbergh and Kathryn Bigelow. See O'Falt (2019). See also the behind-the-scenes commentary in *The Hurt Locker* (2008), by Bigelow, dir.

5. Profoundest thanks to the comrades of #MannicMondays, most especially Matt Hauske, Will Kanyusik, Matthew Noble-Olson, Amish Trivedi, and Nate Wolff, whose buoyant companionship, collective hilarity, and cinematography DMs were of utmost sustenance in the loneliest times of 2020.

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