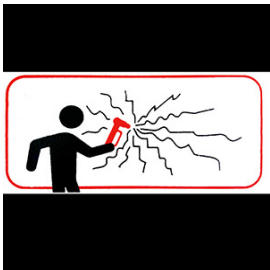# Brainwashed - Francisco López, "Untitled #360"

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The three movements of *Untitled #360* stand out distinctly in Francisco López's recent body of work, largely due to their sheer sense of force and chaos. With scant information as far as source material goes, my best guess is that he plundered sound effects libraries, especially those aimed at action and horror film productions, to construct this lengthy composition. Rather than radically processing these sources, he instead focuses on layering and arranging them (with tasteful amounts of treatment) to create a tense, audio-only pseudo-narrative that is among the most aggressive and harsh that I have heard from him.

[Emitter Micro](#)

The first movement is the most traditionally collage style in nature. Crashes, explosions and chaos are all about, peppered with gunshots and the occasional music cue or two. The sound never relents, with López layering sound atop sound, with a bit more in the way of playback speed and direction adjustments. Panned all around, it is a disorienting mass of noise. While other sections on the album seem to hint at a narrative structure, this is the disc's frenzied, messy inception.

Bookended by the two shorter, less varied works, the centerpiece of *Untitled #360* is the 54 minute "Movement Two." Comparably, there is much more space and breathing room here, and also a bit calmer. Opening with the sounds of water, López brings in knocking and banging sound effects, but never overwhelmingly so. Crackling indistinct sounds and hydraulic machinery noises give a literal industrial atmosphere to the piece, though later offset by recordings of heartbeats that almost approximate some semblance of rhythm and a hint of humanity.

Francisco López almost brings about a sense of melody with some droning electronic atmospheres, but those are brief and passing. Soon, he takes the piece takes in a darker direction, bringing a mass of violent, fleshy thuds and squirming, wet sounds the forefront. At this point López has apparently locked into the "tension" tagged sounds in his effects library,

because he hits all the ones that could be expected: ticking clocks, heavy breathing, and monstrous growls (or something of that nature). The jarring outbursts, offset with hissing air and the occasionally random scraping noise, culminates in a dark, tense, and unsettling conclusion to the section.

It is the third and final movement where it seems as if the unspoken narrative is clearest, and also the most visceral. A dense mix of sound effects cannot obscure the explosions, crashing, and crunching sounds he stacks throughout the mix. A wide array of automatic weapon fire can be heard from all distances, punctuated with car alarms and the occasional passing helicopter. It is much akin to a protracted, dramatic film shoot out scene, a la Michael Mann's *Heat*, but with all music cues and dialog stripped away, rendering it even more inhuman and purely violent. Spread out over 13 minutes and with the drastic volume shifts, it is a jarring, harrowing experience with a siren here, followed by a disturbingly loud burst of submachine gun fire. The closing minutes in which everything takes on a submerged, aquatic, quality, complete with sonar pings, labored breathing, and the hissing of an oxygen tank further demonstrate how López could end up with some Hollywood sound design credits to his name.

I never know what to expect when listening to a new Francisco López work because, as prolific as he may be, he is always doing something new and it never is disappointing. I was not quite prepared for the harshness and often terrifying narrative he constructs in *Untitled #360*, so the first listen was a mix of baffling and frightening. However, like all of his work, it is diverse and complex and, while not necessarily the most comfortable of listening, is always a fascinating experience.

samples:

- [Movement 1](#)
- [Movement 2](#)
- [Movement 3](#)