

Great Fire Of London Script

1666: The Burning City

By

Aner Chen

Wenye Wu

Sharon Chen

Yao Han

Color Guide

Transition

Extra Stuff

1. OUT (180° FILM) . SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE THEATRE - NIGHT

TITLE PAGE IN

(Narrator V.O.)

Imagine London at the dawn of the 17th century. It is a city on the rise. The streets were alive with the sounds of Shakespeare's plays—his words performed in the Globe Theatre, echoing through the hearts of audiences across the city. This is a London buzzing with energy, driving the rise of a new era of commerce, science, and empire.

As Shakespeare's plays captured the imagination of the people, London itself became a cultural hub of the Elizabethan world. The Globe, where his masterpieces like Hamlet, Macbeth, and Romeo and Juliet were brought to life, stood at the heart of this vibrant, bustling city. However, behind the city walls, a war with the Dutch Republic was raging and London's fortune was about to change.

(AUDIO: Shakespearean lines fade in over narration, People screaming, wood cracking, crashing sounds)

In 1666, the city would face its greatest trial—one that would forever alter its future. The London Shakespeare wrote about, with its old taverns, theaters, and homes, was soon to be consumed by the flames of a catastrophe.

Transition To

** Animated transition to toon shader (Black and White),
Suggesting you are entering VR. **

2. INT (180° FILM) . MAP SPACE (Bird Eye View?)

Fade In

(Narrator V.O.)

In front of you is a modern 2D map of the city that will help you understand the geography of key locations.

You are starting at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, we now move to the very spot where history would be rewritten—Pudding Lane, the unsuspecting birthplace of the Great Fire.

Now, let's begin our journey through history...

Audiences are transported into an endless dark space where a modern 2D map of London is displayed in front of them. This map serves to provide a clear understanding of the overall geography of London.

The map will feature a digital pin indicating the location the audience is currently viewing (in this case, **Shakespeare's Globe Theatre**). As the narration continues, an animated path from the current location to the destination will be revealed. (**Shakespeare's Globe Theatre to Pudding Lane**)

This map will be used throughout the experience and will feature animated overlays that showcase the areas affected by the fire and the fire path as the video progresses.

3. OUT (VR). 1666 BAKERY & RESIDENTIAL PUDDING LANE - NIGHT

1:00 A.M.

September 2, 1666

(Narrator V.O.)

This is Pudding Lane. The street got its name from the butcher's waste ("pudding") that is dumped all the time into the road and washed down toward the Thames.

Back then, people used candles or open flames for heating, lighting, and cooking, and fire could (and often did) spread easily between buildings.

It is here, that tonight September 2nd, in this small bakery owned by the Royal Army's baker - Thomas Farriner, that a spark would change the faith of the city forever.

As you can see, Pudding Lane is a narrow, filthy, and overcrowded street, home to bakers, butchers, and merchants who live above their shops. Buildings are made from wood, straw, and tar. Look above, can you see their upper floor nearly touching?

At first, it was nothing more than a flicker, lost in the shadows of the night. The flame smoldered in silence, but then, in an instant, it leapt from the oven, dancing across dry timber and creeping up the walls. The fire grew hungrier, quickly transforming from a tiny ember into a furious beast.

(Sound Effect: Crackling Fire, Distant Sounds of an Alarm Bell.)

Once the bakery caught fire, it spread quickly, feeding on dry wood and thatched roofs, leaping from house to house. London's tightly packed wooden buildings fueled the flames and pushed it further out into neighbouring streets. Once full of life, these narrow passages turned into blazing corridors of destruction.

Standing here, you are about 6 minutes away from the river Thames. This is the nearest water source and you'd have to be strong enough to haul a single bucket of water from the river, struggling through the narrow, smoke-filled streets.

Despite frantic efforts, the fighting of the fire was painfully slow and the river could not stop it. Bucket chains pulled water from the Thames, but it was too little and too slow. The fire raged on, and the disaster was yet to come.

Fade Out

(Narrator V.O.)

As the fire raged, the city itself seemed to burn alive. By dawn, the fire had already devoured much of the surrounding district, but this was only the beginning.

4. OUT (180° FILM/Present) . PUDDING LANE - NIGHT

(Narrator V.O.)

Behind the monument of the Great Fire of London, it is the pudding lane where the catastrophe began.

The pudding lane is now a small street running between East cheap Street and Thames Street.

Pudding Lane today is almost unrecognizable compared to how it was in 1666. Today, Pudding Lane is a quiet, modern street in the London financial district surrounded by office buildings, businesses, and restaurants with no residents.

5. OUT (VR). WAREHOUSE RIVERBANK (Sitting on a boat)- Day and Night.

Morning – Afternoon & Evening

September 2, 1666

Fade In

(Narrator V.O.)

After erupting in Pudding Lane, the Great Fire of London spread rapidly towards the warehouses on the riverbank, where countless stood packed with highly flammable goods.

You are looking at one of them now. This one is filled with the lifeblood of the city—timber from the Baltic, coal from Newcastle, oil and tar from the Mediterranean, and barrels of spirits from France and Spain. But

what makes them valuable also makes them deadly. They were filled with fuel, waiting for the right spark.

As the heat becomes unbearable, the barrels of oil and alcohol exploded, sending fireballs into the night sky. Embers, carried by strong winds, will ignite more buildings in a terrifying chain reaction.

For many, there was only one escape—the river. Some threw themselves into the Thames to escape the advancing flames, while others crowded onto boats, desperately pushing off from the burning shore.

Cut Transition

6. OUT (180° FILM) . ROYAL EXCHANGE - DAY.

September 3, 1666

(Narrator V.O.)

As the Great Fire of London spread westward from Pudding Lane and the warehouse, it reached the heart of the city's center of commerce and trade.

The Royal Exchange, though a stone building, was surrounded by timber structures that caught fire almost instantly. The Royal Exchange, founded

by Sir Thomas Gresham in 1565, was a symbol of London's mercantile power, where traders and merchants from around the world conducted business. As the fire spread through Cheapside street and the surrounding area, it burnt through bookstores, jewelry parlours.

Fade Out

7. OUT (180° FILM) . Cheapside - DAY.

September 3, 1666

Fade Out

(Narrator V.O.)

In less than a few hours, the Royal Exchange, once the symbol of London's financial might, was reduced to rubble, consumed by the inferno. The flames didn't stop there. As the fire spread uncontrollably, one of the busiest and most vital commercial hubs in the city.

This is a historic street in the City of London, renowned as a major commercial hub and center for global trade since medieval times. The name "Cheapside" originates from the Old English word "ceapan," meaning market, reflecting its role as a marketplace.

In 1666, Cheapside is one of the busiest streets in London. This area is teeming with activity, from leather goods to the finest silks imported from Asia. It is home around 2000-3000 residents and workers in approximately 150-200 timber-framed buildings. It was a hub for goldsmiths, mercers, and grocers, with an estimated 50-100 goldsmiths and 30-50 cloth merchants operating in the area. The street was known for its high property values, with rents ranging from £10 to £40 per year and prime commercial spaces fetching £200-£1,000 in value.

Lined with timber-framed buildings, the narrow street quickly became a death trap for people who lived and worked there. Cheapside was a vital artery in the city's economy; it is the home to a variety of shops, businesses, and stalls dealing in goods ranging from textiles to luxury imports.

It left nothing but ruin in its wake. The destruction of the Royal Exchange and the businesses on Cheapside disrupted London's trade for years, temporarily halting its position as a global financial center. The loss was immense—both in economic terms and

in the livelihoods of those who
depended on this bustling marketplace.

8. OUT/INT(VR) . 1666 St. Paul's Cathedral - Night

September 4, 1666

Fade In

(Narrator V.O.)

After reducing Cheapside and the
Royal Exchange to ruins, the fire is
now relentlessly marching westward,
reaching one of London's most iconic
landmarks, St. Paul's Cathedral.

The great medieval structure has
been standing here for centuries, its
towering spire dominating the skyline a
symbol of faith and strength.

Many believe the cathedral, with
its thick stone walls, will withstand
the inferno, and so printers and
booksellers will soon be rushing to
store their valuable goods inside,
thinking them safe. But they had
underestimated the fire's fury.

The fire will show no mercy. The
intense heat is drying out the aging
stone, making it brittle. Flames are
licking at the cathedral's great wooden
roof. The roof is covered in lead and

the heat is now so intense that the lead is starting to melt, running down the walls in molten rivers. By now, the fire has reached extreme temperatures of **980–1,250°C**. This temperature far exceeded lead's melting point **327.5°C**, leading to the complete destruction of the cathedral.

Eyewitnesses described the horrifying sight of the great dome collapsing in on itself, sending sparks and embers into the night sky. Books and manuscripts inside were all lost to the fire. The great cross that had once stood atop St. Paul's fall, consumed by the inferno.

London's most sacred landmark had been reduced to rubble.

Fade In

9. OUT (180° FILM) . Morden St. Paul's Cathedral - Day
(Optional)

Fade Out

(Narrator V.O.)

From the ashes of destruction, a new vision emerged.

In the years that followed, the cathedral would be reborn—this time,

under the masterful design of Sir Christopher Wren, rising from ruin to become the magnificent structure that still stands today.

Today, St. Paul's is more than just a place of worship. It is a site of royal ceremonies, a resting place for great figures of British history and a beloved tourist attraction with 1,493,184 visitors in the year of 2024.

Fade In

10. OUT(VR). Map (Showcase the end point/large scale show the devastation/ Bird eye view from a watch Tower) - DAY

September 6, 1666

Timeline and Maps available at Miro boards.

Fade Out

(Narrator V.O.)

On September 6, 1666, the Great Fire of London, which began in the early hours of September 2nd, 1666, would rage for four long days, consuming everything in its path. It tore through the heart of the city, from Pudding Lane to Cheapside, from the Royal Exchange to St. Paul's Cathedral. But, as all fires must, it

eventually began to slow—its fury finally running out of fuel.

By the third day, when the fire was moving toward the western districts of London. The wind, which had fuelled the blaze for so long, started to subside.

To the east, the fire finally began to slow near the Tower of London, where the city's defense had protected the area from total devastation. The fire had already swept through the poorer districts, leaving little behind. But here, where stone walls stood strong, the fire was eventually stopped.

To the west, the fire slowly reached its final destination at Temper Church and to the south it was contained by the mighty Thames.

To the north, the fire had reached as far as Farringdon and Pie Corner. As the fire approached the northern limits, the wind began to shift, pushing the flames toward the River Thames. The flames slowly reached the borders of the city's old walls as the people of London fought valiantly to protect what was left. At Pie Corner, a statue now stands—the Golden

Boy—marking the place where the blaze finally came to an end.

By the 6th of September, the fire was finally under control. London lay in ruins—almost 87,000 people had lost their homes, and the city was left to rebuild from the ashes. The Great Fire of London was a turning point in history—a tragedy that reshaped the city, its people, and its future.

Fade In

11. OUT (180° FILM). MONUMENT - NIGHT (Ending #1)

(Narrator V.O.)

Standing tall in the heart of London, the Monument to the Great Fire is a silent sentinel, a reminder of a city forever scarred. It was the biggest and most famous fire in London history. From here, the fire that destroyed 87 churches and over 13,000 houses and caused what would now be £1.1 billion worth of damage began.

The monument was designed by Sir Christopher Wren, the renowned architect. Its location is no coincidence. It stands just yards away from the spot where the fire began in a Thomas Farriner's small bakery.

If you were to pull down the monument and place it at ground level, the tip of its column, which is 202 feet (61 meters) tall, indeed be near the spot where the fire began, making it a symbolic marker for the tragedy's origin.

Straight Cut (Transition)

(Circle Closed Continue to Consequences and the impact of the Great fire of London)

12. OUT (180). Tower of London/City Hall/Skyline (Political and Social Consequences) - DAY (Final Ending)

Fade Out

(Narrator V.O.)

Many officials were involved in the efforts to extinguish the blaze. King Charles II took an active role during the fire, providing instructions for firefighting efforts and overseeing efforts to contain the blaze.

(Emergency Powers and Centralized Control)

The Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Bloodworth, was criticized for his lack of action during the fire, and this increased the push for stronger

governmental control and emergency preparedness. (A Woman Might Piss it out!)

The financial devastation caused by the fire led to a greater role of the government in managing risk. The creation of the first fire insurance companies helped citizens and merchants to recover financially.

New Act:

After the devastation of the Great Fire of London, new laws were put in place to ensure the city would never burn so easily again. The 1667 Rebuilding Act transformed the city's architecture - banning wooden buildings in favor of brick and stone, widening streets to slow the spread of fire, and enforcing strict height limits for houses. Open spaces were introduced as firebreaks, creating a safer urban layout. To solve disputes over rebuilding costs, the Fire Court was established, ensuring reconstruction moved swiftly. Then, in 1670, the London Building Act reinforced these measures - mandating stronger foundations, tiled roofs, and brick firewalls between buildings. These reforms reshaped London, turning it into a city built for resilience.