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Dynamics, Determinability and Configurative Audience Involvement:

The TV Drama Series in the Era of Social Media

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Abstract

The dramatic television series, like many other mediums, has traditionally adhered to a consistent set of text variables over its development as a form of media. These variables are Dynamics, Determinability, Transiency, Perspective, Access, Linking and User Function, and television series has typically maintained a fixed quality for each of these categories. However, with the era of social media, the potential for these variables to open up arises, and it is possible that the way we view a dramatic television series as a text is no longer governed by these guidelines as strictly as it once was. Social media has already been utilised by the television industry in regards to marketing or establishing fan-bases, but it's rarely been employed in such a way that it can reshape how we view and analyse television.

While there are several different ways that this potential can be explored from a narrative perspective, many of these present very clear drawbacks to utilising them from a production standpoint. While a choose-your-own-adventure type television series where the audience votes on decisions would certainly shake up these variables a great deal, it also represents a huge increase in production costs and effort, as splitting paths result in a lot of unused or unaired footage.

The goal is to find a concept that shakes up the traditional television format with its integration of social media, that doesn’t result in a huge shift in production costs. One concept that potentially achieves this was the idea that the actual content of the television series remains fixed, while the order of the episodes shifts around depending on audience interaction and feedback via social media. This represents an extremely interesting narrative concept, where the story has to make sense regardless of the order the episodes are viewed in, while still shifting the narrative structure enough to be interesting for audiences.

Based on this concept, Kleptoes is born. Kleptoes is a dramatic serialized television series focused around a group of friends who develop a taste for burglary after seeking revenge for a robbery of their own house. Kleptoes starts and finishes with a traditional pilot episode and finale episode, while each episode in between focuses on a different character across the same timeline. These episodes can be viewed in any order and make sense, as we see what each character has been up to
in the time span between pilot and finale, often seeing the same scene from different perspectives with different details revealed or hidden.

Not just an interesting and innovative format for storytelling, this concept also succeeds in reworking some of the earlier variables to separate itself from the traditional manner of viewing television as a text. *Dynamics, Determinability* and *User Function* in particular are all impacted greatly by this integration of social media, and prove that the way we view the television series as a text can be reshaped greatly by incorporating digital media in it's development.
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The Series as a Text

‘How does the new media landscape shape how we view the television series as a text?’

The concept of the serialized dramatic television series as a text has remained relatively intact during the influx of new types of programming onto screens over the last few decades. With some possible exceptions, the variables that are often used to define a ‘text’ all remain the same across the television platform, with potentially untapped potential in reworking how we view these texts in contrast to a traditional standpoint. It could be theorized that this untapped potential primarily arises from the rise of digital media over the last two decades, as the continuing impact of the Internet in particular on the media landscape creates all kinds of possibilities for how a television series as a ‘text’ is defined now compared to twenty years ago. Using social media and other digital platforms as a base, what ways can a television series be re-positioned to transform these variables from those we are accustomed to? Has the idea of the dramatic series as a text evolved from the past, and how can it possibly evolve further in the future?

While there is no governing definition for what constitutes a text, it can be described as “any object with the primary function to relay verbal information”.1 This definition; even if extended from the verbal to the audio-visual, seems to imply that texts are defined strictly by the medium in which they operate, a notion that could be challenged by the new digital landscape. Aarseth makes an important distinction in regards to how this information is relayed, that there is the string of signs as it appears to readers and the string of signs as it exists in the text, calling these signs ‘scriptons’ and ‘textons’ respectively. Using this terminology, a series of variables for a ‘text’ can be outlined, which distinguish how different media fall under the category of ‘text’ in a different way.

\[1\] (Aarseth, 1997)
The first of these variables; *Dynamics*, refers to whether the text is static or dynamic due to the nature of the scriptons. When the scriptons are constant, we can refer to this as a static text, as the signs of the text appear to the reader in the same manner. Novels, films and television shows are all typically static texts, as they play out in the same way regardless of the reader. Video games and choose-your-own-adventure books can be described as a dynamic text, as the scriptons are constantly shifting as readers encounter aspects of the text in a different order or way.

*Determinability* refers to the stability of traversal function, or whether the same response to any given situation will produce the same results. A text can be determinate or indeterminate depending on this distinction. For the most part, nearly all traditional texts are determinate, while certain video games may be indeterminate due to their random nature making results unpredictable.

The *Transiency* variable refers to whether the passing of time actually causes scriptons to appear, versus texts that are consumed at the reader's own pace. When the text is transient, the scriptons will flow at a fixed rate and the messages relayed in a constant manner, such as film and television. Any form of traditional reading can be typically described as intransient, as the same scriptons can be conveyed at a different pace depending on the reader, with every audience member free to consume the text at a speed of their choosing.

*Perspective* is the variable that considers whether the text requires the user to play an active and strategic role in the world of the text. A personal text is when the user’s role is active and they do play a part in the flow of events. This once again includes certain videogames and choose-your-own-adventure novels, as the events that transpire can be shaped and determined by user input, with characters making choices governed by the reader. Traditional novels, film and television are generally described as impersonal, as the effects of the reader’s hand are not felt within the world of the text. Despite many novels relaying the story in a first-person perspective, this isn’t
enough to constitute the text as personal, as there are not really any options or things to do for the reader but read what they are being shown.

When all the scriptons of the text are readily available for users to Access, this means the text is considered random access rather than controlled. In most forms of video media, access would be considered controlled, as you generally have to go through specific passages in order to get to the one you want. This notion applies to broadcast television as well as film in cinemas, but becomes a little hazy once DVD scene selection starts to become a factor. Any form of textbook or novel that has a contents or index section at the start could be potentially considered random access, as readers are provided with a quick and easy way to find the section they want.

*Linking* is the variable that determines whether a text is organized by explicit links for the user to follow. Video games typically have conditional links, where a certain level can only be access after completing one of the earlier ones within the story. Television and film are generally unlinked, as viewers can drop in and drop out at any time and still be able to access the future sections they want to watch, although their understanding of the story may suffer in this case.

The final variable *User Functions* asks whether the text asks additional tasks of the user in their consumption of the text. An explorative function is when the viewer must decide which path to take, often a function included in decision-based videogames. Configurative functions are when the scriptons are chosen or created by the user to a degree. This is again a function very commonly seen in videogames, notably the ‘Role-Playing-Game’, with players often choosing the backstories for the main characters. If the primary decision a reader is making is the meaning they are drawing from the text, then the function is interpretation.

From a brief look at these variables, it is immediately clear that traditional broadcast television generally falls under some very consistent variables across each category. However, we live in the age where traditional broadcast
television is no longer necessarily the primary way for consuming a television series, as the Internet continues to shape the way audience members consume media. Based on how the Internet has already influenced television in terms of both narrative and productive capacities, how much can these standard variables for the television series as a text change when a series is developed that caters directly for the new potentials the Internet provides? Which of these seven variables are opened up by these possibilities, shaking up the framework of how we view television? These are all questions that are hopefully answered by going through the development process for a television series, crafting one around the notion that the Internet can be used in a very interesting way to alter the variables of the text.
Literature Review

The following articles cited are all examples of research conducted of the relationship between various aspects of the Internet and television audiences. Despite the focus being on an International market they serve as an example of the kinds of data that can be gathered for a New Zealand study. Although it is worth noting that some of these pieces of research are all studies commissioned or conducted by commercial firms, and do not necessarily express a completely neutral and objective point of view. Several of these are also from the late 90s to the early 2000s, in the period where the Internet was starting to be seen as a viable avenue for television, which draw some interesting predictions for where things would head in the industry, some of them correct and some not.

The first piece of research comes from 1998 by the Canadian journal *Broadcaster*, which explored the possibility that Internet based news media would threaten the television news networks as the first news source for the public. ² While television news was still definitively the number one source of news for Canadians, they reported more people than ever before were opting to consult the Internet for their news, with 60% using television for their news and 9% using the Internet. This figure almost doubled for the 18-34 year old age group, with 16% being Internet users for their news, supporting the idea that it was the younger generations more willing to explore other news options.

Also referencing the impact of the Internet on Canadian television specifically was a prediction in the *Canadian Business* journal that the Internet is stealing all the young viewers, and that eventually the Internet will let people watch TV whenever they want. ³ To Chidley, traditional television was a dying medium; an idea which had been floating around since the mid 90s, but was quickly becoming a reality with high-bandwidth Internet access becoming more common in most households. The prediction was made that

³ (Chidley, 1999)
in 5 to 10 years, consumers will have to choose between Internet based and broadcast television, and broadcast will inevitably lose out to the more accessible medium, presenting some serious challenges to Canada's $3 billion production and broadcast industry. Interestingly enough, the digital-streaming service Netflix launched in Canada in 2010, just one year outside of Chidley's predicted window, but was not quite the death of broadcast television immediately as he predicted, with consumers still having strong access to both.

A set-top box company called WebTV was also set to use the Internet in a way that didn’t alienate broadcast television but instead enhance it, with a second generation set to release following a confession from CEO Steve Perlman in 1997, where he claimed that people that were “really into it, they don't think of it as the web, they think of it as better television,” and that they would call WebTV “interactive television if it didn't have such a bad reputation - if, called that, it wasn't doomed to failure.” Operating off a scaled down version of the Microsoft Windows PC OS, WebTV’s pride lay with its electronic programme guide, able to display details about a film during it; including the actor’s other filmography, as well as interactive statistics on teams and players during live sports broadcasts, in addition to being able to record video for later viewing. To this end, they saw the use of Internet as an evolution of television rather than an invasion by the Internet into home entertainment.

The impact the Internet was having on the actual time of television viewing was a subject of hot debate in the early 2000s as well, with conflicting research presenting results on opposite sides of the coin, some saying that Internet based activities like browsing or instant-messaging was having a serious impact on the hours of TV consumption by individuals, with others determining the Internet had very little impact on television viewing times, suggesting they are completely irrelevant activities, and that it’s “hard to believe that teens are deciding to turn off their favourite TV shows in order to

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4 (Denton, 1997)
do a completely unrelated activity”. 5 A study was conducted by UCLA that allegedly concluded that “television is the primary victim of the growth of the Internet” 6 and that users were buying time to go browsing online that would usually be spent watching television, although the study was funded by DirecTV, Time Warner and the National Cable Television Association, which presents a clear issue of objectivity. The spokesman for the National Association of Broadcasters disputed the findings of this research, claiming that other studies had indicated very little, if any impact on TV viewing, although lacking any citations for these studies.

2005 presented more fears that the Internet was still going to be the death of television, suggesting that the Internet had seized the spotlight over broadcast television and threatened to change the way forever how people get their television. 7 TelevisionWeek deemed broadband, wireless and Internet-protocol TV as game changers and were bringing forth a dramatic shift in how people obtain information and the manner in which they are entertained. They suggested that while over-the-air, cable and satellite based television would still have an important place within the broader entertainment industry, it would lose the dominant position it had in the past, and that to compete in the constantly shifting media landscape, it was up to the networks, distributors and providers of television to rethink their approach to programming, marketing, and the business model that they used, unless they wanted to be left behind as the digital world moved on without them. The chief executives of ThinkBox and the Internet Advertising Bureau took a very different outlook on the situation, urging the industry to avoid arguing back and forth with television versus Internet, and instead suggested that they aren’t rivals at all. 8 Both of them saw the Internet isn’t in itself a medium, but simply a technology for consuming the medium, no different than a physical television set is the technology commonly used for consuming television programming. They instead asked why call it “Television versus Internet?” instead calling it “TV plus internet” or “TV delivered by internet”, suggestions

5 (Osborne, 2000)  
6 (Shiver, 2001)  
7 (Anonymous. TelevisionWeek, 2005)  
8 (Anonymous. Campaign, 2007)
which acknowledge the difference between the two and have far less negative connotations that seem to imply that there can only be one or the other.

Another study looks to address the potential that the Internet has allowed modern television viewing in terms of intertextuality, namely directing viewers towards companion websites that are attached to certain shows, where they can gather more information or detail about the content, as well as have live discussions regarding what they are watching. 9 This is a phenomenon we see in a lot of modern television shows; both here in New Zealand and internationally, with the likes of Twitter, where fans are encouraged to tweet their responses to what is happening on screen using the title of the show as a hashtag to appeal to likeminded fans. This relationship can be mutually beneficial, as shown by a study conducted by the Nielsen Company, which aimed to explore the impact that their television ratings had on Twitter and vice versa. 10 They discovered through time-series analysis that a spike in TV ratings quite often increased the volume of tweets being made at that time, and conversely a spike in tweets with the appropriate hashtag could also actually lead to additional tune-ins from viewers. This is where the intertextuality that the Internet provides actually can serve to enhance the television industry, causing people that may not currently be watching television to sit down and watch just because their friends or favourite celebrities are.

In 2009, the Leichtman Research Group looked to analyse how much online video usage had increased within that particular year and whether this had any impact on how much television audiences were watching. 11 Despite on-demand services growing hugely in popularity, television shows were actually ranked fairly low in what videos people were regularly watching online. It was concluded at this stage that the impact on-demand services had on the viewership broadcast television was drawing in was negligible, with

9 (Brown, 2009)
11 (Durham, 2009)
75% of the adults surveyed who regularly watched videos online strongly disagreeing with the notion that they now watch TV less often.

By the time 2010 had rolled around, it had almost become industry standard that practically all-new TV sets would incorporate internet television functionality as a standard feature, to be used alongside their current television services, and not necessarily instead of. 12 By 2014 it was projected there would be 785 million fixed broadband connections worldwide, which meant that over 50% of households would have access to a broadband connection, a large sum of which would be capable of streaming high quality video and with it, Internet Television services. It was also predicted that the market for Internet Television would grow by 90% by 2014, acknowledging that with the entry into the market by many new streaming services, public broadcasters, cable companies and satellite providers were also working to roll out their own services to stay competitive in the expanding market. These new streaming services; such as Netflix and Hulu, all seek to leverage changing consumer tastes, low infrastructure costs, and the flexibility Internet technology provides to shape a new television viewing experience for audiences. 13 To compete with the current television market, this involved providing access for consumers to retransmitted broadcast television. Despite all the innovations these Internet Television services provide, at their current state they cannot provide a comprehensive substitute for live broadcast feeds in some aspects. Even being able to cover pre-recorded content, these on-demand services cannot replicate the value of some live programming, mainly events such as the news or sports, which immediately lose their value to viewers once aired. This means that for the meantime, broadcast television still has a strong place in the future despite the expanding market of on-demand services, until the streaming services can acquire the means to live stream their own sporting and news content.

These articles all serve to expose the contrasting viewpoints regarding televisions role in an Internet based society over the last fifteen years. Despite

13 (Garon, 2013)
initial doomsday scenarios pitched where the Internet completely takes over television, broadcast television still appears to have a significant place in the entertainment market and is even enhanced by the Internet in a lot of ways.
Case Study - Social Media: a critical introduction

Social Media: a critical introduction by Christian Fuchs prides itself as being the most complete discussion on social media, using critical theory to assess the controversies and contradictions of the modern media format. Fuchs breaks down the parts that make up the digital media landscape and critically interrogates them, examining the potential benefits but also the downsides that social media brings to society, particularly from Facebook, Twitter, WikiLeaks and Wikipedia. Some of the concepts that he introduces or examines are also useful for analyzing the toll that the social media era has taken on television, with both positive and negative repercussions on the television audience.

One of the first arguments made regarding social media is its place as participatory culture, which by its very nature strictly opposes traditional television. Participatory culture refers to the involvement of users, audiences, consumers and fans in the creation of culture and content, such as the collective editing process on Wikipedia, the uploading of images to Facebook or the production and subsequent uploading of videos to YouTube. This leads to the argument that culture and society has become more democratic with the rise of social media, as users and audiences have the capacity to create and produce culture themselves, and not just listen or watch without activity themselves, as is the case with traditional television as well as other forms of old media such as newspaper and radio, where there is one sender and many recipients. In terms of television specifically, this concept doesn’t necessarily dictate that the passive audiences of television are bad as such, but participatory culture can have a negative impact on specific forms of television, with news and current affairs based programming being one of them.

The power that social media brings to news-related affairs is mass communication, as news delivered via blogs or a YouTube video can

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14 (Fuchs, 2013)
potentially reach a global audience, without the restrictions or guidelines that a network television news channel must follow when presenting current affairs to audience. Traditional television news segments are often governed in terms of the content they can show, the manner in which they deliver it, and sometimes fail to be completely objective due to conflicting interests with advertisers on the network. These are all codes that independent “produsers” can avoid, providing an objective point of view on affairs that they post to their blogs or discuss on Facebook without any commercial forces restricting what they say. In terms of news content, this is a situation where the rise of social media may have actually harmed television, potentially draining from their audience numbers as more people turn to the internet for their news needs, a place where they can also participate themselves by commenting on articles and discussing with other interested parties.

Following on from this idea of citizen journalism, television networks can also use social media to enhance their news audience, integrating their programming into a presence on social media to encourage participation from audiences in regards to their news stories. One current affairs program that has a very strong social media presence is TVNZ’s Seven Sharp, who uploads videos and photos of the topics they will be investigating that night, encouraging users to comment and discuss their opinions on the subject, sparking up debates among the audiences themselves. Following this model, it is clear that it is possible to have a traditionally screening television current affairs segment, while also providing an avenue for the audience to voice their opinion on the matter and disagree with the arguments presented by the network.

Another link that participatory culture potentially shares with television is the idea of peer reviewing, as any new television shows can be recommended; or in many cases recommended against, by any audience member with a blog or a Facebook profile. While peer reviewing has always been around with simple word-of-mouth reviewing to friends and families, social media allows someone’s opinion about the latest Shortland St episode to reach all of their associates, who they don’t see on a day-to-day basis, as
well as strangers on a global scale, to provide them with a bit more insight as to whether they should tune in, without having to consult the reviews in the newspaper or on a current affairs show. This can be potentially harmful for the ratings of new television shows, as someone may avoid a new television show they were intrigued about based on their Facebook friends review of the pilot episode, even if they may not necessarily share the same opinion about the show in question. For obvious reasons it can also be beneficial to the success of a program, as someone who may not have even heard of the show and would not have watched it in the first place, is now interested because several of their Facebook friends gave it 5/5 stars. As participatory culture means anyone with an Internet connection can be a reviewer, it simply gives viewers more sources to base their choices of television viewing off rather than just one journalistic review in their local newspaper.

The idea of targeted advertising in social media is something that has a potential application for television audiences, as it is a simple but effective way to market new television specifically at the demographic it is aimed at. Buchs discusses the idea of targeted Internet advertising being able to target different user groups with different advertising based on monitoring their online behavior at the same time, in order to deliver relevant marketing to the target demographics. This form of advertising directly challenges the traditional form of advertising seen on television, where every viewer sees the same advertisements at the same time. This opens up possibilities for this form of advertising to benefit television networks as well, as advertising can be directed based on the television programs that a user has “liked” on Facebook; if someone has liked the Boardwalk Empire and The Sopranos Facebook pages, they may be presented with advertising for television shows on a similar or the same network with similar themes and target demographics. While this is a fairly basic example, this illustrates how useful social media could be in marketing new television shows and getting audience exposure.

Fuchs also set to explore the role that social media played in various “revolutions” and protests, comparing the role it took to traditional forms of
media such as television. There were several complications in coming to a conclusive answer regarding social medias influence in several revolutions, with drastically different internet adoption rates in different countries including Facebook users of the population. A survey was conducted about the role the Internet played during the Egyptian revolution during 2011, suggesting that Facebook had become the prime medium “used to tie up events and news” according to 71% participants, surpassing television and other forms of traditional media. However, this survey had its limitations as a credible piece of research, as the survey only focused on Egyptian Internet users, who only made up 26.4% of the Egyptian population. Another survey conducted surrounding activists media use in Tahrir Square showed that face-to-face interaction was the most important form of protest communication at 93%, closely followed by television at 92%, with phones, print media and SMS all falling ahead of Facebook, which rated 42%. This shows that interpersonal communication as well as traditional media, such as television, weren’t losing their significance in revolutions as fast as many predicted they would, that in terms of a revolution social media wasn’t quite ready to take over older forms of media in the less developed parts of the world. However, surveys were conducted among the Occupy Wall Street Movement, that suggested that television and other traditional media forms had taken a huge hit against social media in the role they played during protests, with only 45.1% of respondents tuning in to national television and 33.1% to local television at least once a week for informing themselves about the Movement, while 89.7% used Facebook, 72.2% used YouTube, and 83.4% used the Occupy websites themselves. Despite surveys in Egypt suggesting that television was still an important tool for staying informed regarding revolutions, the Occupy Wall Street Movement quickly showed that in the Western world, social media was quickly becoming the primary tool for staying current with protests.

Through Fuchs’ critical interrogation of social media, we are able to link several points back to the way social media has shaped or influenced television, or how they may potentially share a link in the future. The concept of participatory culture by definition opposes television as a medium, but can work with it in an interesting fashion by encouraging audience participation
and response via social media, but can also be hindered by social media when alternative sources of news are found instead of television. Targeted Internet Advertising on social media based websites provide a strong avenue for television networks, allowing a method of marketing that delivers their programming straight to the demographic it's aiming for by associating audience interests with the category their programming falls under. Finally, despite evidence suggesting that television is still the relevant source for protest-related incidents in under-developed countries, surveys suggest the Western world is slowly leaving television behind when it comes to revolutions in favor of social media, a far more accessible and live medium. From these several aspects of Christian Fuchs’ introduction to social media, we can see that it has already had a strong impact on the television landscape and will continue to do so in the years to come.
Case Study - Hope and Wire

Because of its subject matter, one could make the argument that TV3 miniseries *Hope and Wire* seemed more targeted towards the older demographics, with its sentimental look at the emotions and relationships of the victims rather than the quakes themselves. This meant marketing it in a certain way, which was mostly achieved through television advertisements and articles in magazines and newspapers, although they did make an effort to create a social media presence with a page on Facebook. And it wasn’t a failed attempt by any means, with the page gathering 3000 likes overall by the time the show had been finished for a couple of weeks. But it does raise the question, how much more likes could the show have attracted; and by extension potential viewers, if they had put a bit more resources into drawing attention to the social media market?

Before any effort can be made into keeping viewers on the page, they first needed to attract people to *like* the page in the first place. This is where the concept of Targeted Internet Advertising could’ve played a very important role in building awareness of the program, as Facebook activity could’ve been used to generate significant interest in the Facebook page before the show had even begun. *Hope and Wire* could’ve been suggested to users, who had liked previous works of original New Zealand television or films, as well as those who had just liked the TV3 page in general. By targeting these sorts of users, you would be targeting those who would actually find the subject matter in *Hope and Wire* interesting, and hopefully exposing them to the program before it had even gone to air so that they can potentially even spread the word to friends and family.

May 22\(^{nd}\) marked the first activity on the Facebook page, which was an update of the pages cover photo to show off one of the shows more relatable characters Len, an older gentleman who believed in the common man pulling together rather than relying on the authority figures. This was followed a day later by a status acknowledging the Christchurch based band *The Eastern*, with one of their songs giving the mini series its interesting name. Following
this, there was no additional content uploaded for over two weeks, at which point there was another couple of posts made regarding *The Eastern* and the meaning of their song that inspired the title for the show. Considering the first activity from the page was only six weeks prior to the premiere, the show’s presence was very much non-existent on social media, with two weeks of dead time giving no incentive for interested parties to log on and catch up with the latest promotion for the series. Even as early as two weeks until premiere time there was a nine day dead period with no Facebook activity, slowing down all momentum they had potentially built up when they were regularly uploading content every couple of days.

A large factor behind this was a lack of content to post. Aside from the odd *Stuff* article, there weren’t a lot of resources to draw on to post for visitors of the page. Social media creates a perfect place for those who have seen the advertisement on television and want to know more, to log on and find out more. Character biographies, sneak peeks behind the scenes, a bit of background on the cast and crew, these are all interesting pieces of information that would give those interested a reason to check up on the page from day to day and recommend it to their friends or family. Admittedly, these are things they did start to showcase later into the show’s run, but these could have been things frequenting the page even before the premiere.

Interestingly enough, all of these things can be seen on the official website, so the various bits of trivia and information had been created, just not shared on to the Facebook site. While the Facebook page does have a link to the official website, it’s such a small and insignificant aspect of the page that it would quite easily be looked over by anyone browsing the page. It would’ve made sense to regularly share extracts from the website on a day to day basis, seeing as they had a lot of information regarding the crew, cast and the characters they play.

The idea of the participatory culture can be seen to some extent in the *Hope and Wire* Facebook page, as there are a number of posts to the page in the days following each episode from users posting their opinions for others.
While there were a few negative reviews from audiences, there were also a large number of extremely positive responses, applauding Gaylene Preston for creating a detailed look into some interesting characters on the program. While the Facebook page might not have attracted as many users as it could have, what users did like the page were quite active and passionate in posting their opinions about the latest episode online, sparking debate among one another and creating an online community together.

Putting aside the lack of regular content, the page also lacks the professional shine that a major television networks show should have. Many of the posts have grammatical errors or spelling mistakes, which almost gives off the vibe that it’s a fan page run by a viewer than actually affiliated with the people behind the show. The lack of proofreading can be quite off-putting to anyone initially browsing the page, which could mean less people are interested.
New Television Formats

The area where social media appears to have a particularly interesting impact on television relates to targeted advertising, with many marketers aiming to combine television and social media platforms to direct Internet advertising at those who have seen the live broadcast. By identifying Twitter users who tweeted about a program while watching it, marketers are actually able to present these users with an extended version of an advertisement they witnessed during the broadcast of a show they were watching, creating a continued market plan across multiple platforms when viewers are exposed to the same product from multiple media formats. The notion of the targeted advertising integration with Twitter raises an interesting question, whether there is more potential to integrate Twitter (or other social media) with the live broadcast of a program, and enhance or shape the viewing experience for the audience. Developing a successful concept for social media integration with broadcast television would be invaluable for gathering audiences, with viewers potentially feeling more involved and active if their input on a weekly basis is actually shaping the way the show is viewed each week.

In this case we will be specifically analyzing the potential benefits of social media integration for narrative based television, shows that have a story every week and aren’t some form of reality television. In particular, the concept for the show this would be applied to would be a serialized drama, where the story continues from week to week and individual plotlines are stretched out as arcs across multiple episodes or even entire seasons, as opposed to procedural dramas such as CSI, where individual stories are generally introduced and wrapped up within the same episode.

The seemingly obvious concept to introduce into narrative television to bear the influence of audience interaction would be a multiple outcomes based vote system, where audiences log onto Twitter and vote for the direction they think the program should take in the following episode. As an incentive for audiences to use social media and tune into the show, it doesn’t get more appealing than this, as viewers can feel like their vote online is
actually influencing the direction and overall scope of the show, seeing events play out the way they would like in future episodes. This concept has a lot of limitations however, major ones that affect its viability as a new and exciting form of dramatic television.

From a strictly storytelling perspective, giving audiences several options for what could transpire in the following episode could actually harm the overall impact each episode takes, as viewers would no longer be genuinely surprised at an episodes events as it was listed as one of the possible outcomes the week earlier. This would hurt the narrative aspect of the show, as viewers are simply waiting around week by week to find out which of the storylines were picked, and not to actually tune in and be surprised by what is happening. From a production perspective, this concept presents huge drawbacks, as a large portion of the budget would be going towards filming potential outcomes, scenes that may never even make it to air depending on the choices of the audience. If the choices presented to the audience are extremely significant; including potential character deaths, then the number of potential storylines expands week after week with each additional choice presented to viewers, forming a complicated network of storylines where a large majority goes to waste, only having any significance as deleted scenes on a DVD release. This presents huge problems for the budgeting of a television show, as episode quality would likely suffer if a significant amount of extra footage were being produced. The other option would be to present the audience with what appears to be significant choices, but all inevitably lead towards the same outcome at the climax, where the journey towards the finale is different but the end result is the same. While a much better option for budgeting reasons, this defeats the purpose of even presenting multiple choices for audiences in the first place, as many would feel that they were cheated when their decisions ultimately meant nothing in the grand scheme of the show’s narrative. As both of these options present very clear downsides to social media integration, it would be more beneficial to explore a different concept for audience interaction, one that lets the audience feel like they are controlling the show in some respects while still being feasible in finance and production.
The alternative I have in mind has more to do with the audience influencing the order the episodes are broadcast in than the actual content of the episodes themselves, which sounds like an odd concept for a serialized drama; defined as having an evolving story from episode to episode, to have. The series would begin with a standard episode; following a traditional television 4-act structure, that introduces the concept of the show and all the main characters of the narrative. The episode would end in a relatively tense situation, teasing where things would play out from here, which is where the social media integration would fit in.

Rather than the audience tweeting in or commenting on Facebook choosing the direction they’d like to see the show head in the following episode, audiences would instead potentially tweet the character they would like to see explored in the next episode, “hash-tagging” the show along with the character name they’d like to see. From here, the format of the program changes drastically, with each individual episode focusing on the perspectives of a single character towards the following events, often seeing the same scene play out across multiple episodes with additional details or hidden agendas explored in the individual character pieces. These four or five episodes all play out across a similar timeline, running alongside each other in a way that they can be viewed in any order and the overall story will still make sense, which is where the audience participation plays the key role. By choosing which character they would like to see explored next, the viewer determines the order the episodes are broadcast in, creating a whole range of possibilities for the order in which they would learn important story details or character motivations. Thinking ahead of broadcasts, this creates interesting potential for DVD or Bluray release, where audiences could experiment with alternative viewing orders to determine how the themes and narrative appear different if they are exposed in a different pattern. This concept also creates the possibility to play around with audience expectations and trick them, where the character who seems to have the least interesting story to tell in the pilot could turn out to have the most shocking episode of them all, leaving the story on an exciting cliffhanger for the finale if they were the last character to
get chosen. This of course means that the final episode will take the format of the first episode again, where we see all the characters storylines converge into one narrative timeline once more, seeing how all their individual plotlines form one hopefully thrilling finale.

Drawing from this idea of audience determined episode air order, Kleptos (working title) is born.
Case Study – A Guide to Writing Serial Dramas

“The entertainment business can pretend all they want, but the movie world has changed drastically, particularly in the last five or six years. If you want to be an actor, get on a really good series in television because that’s where it’s at.” 15

This is a quote taken from Billy Bob Thornton; Academy Award winner for Best Adapted Screenplay, in an interview with the Guardian, where Thornton is one of the latest string of talented actors, directors and writers to place their endorsement in television as “the place to be”. As more of the talent in Hollywood; both behind the camera and in front of, heads toward television, the question must be raised. Is television the better medium for storytelling?

Firstly, television needs to be redefined into individual genres before such a statement can be made. Before a substantial argument can be made, it’s imperative to take a vast majority of general television genres out of the equation, namely all forms of reality television, soap operas, news broadcasts and to a lesser extent; cartoons and sitcoms. All of these are all technically television shows, but are worthless in terms of composing an argument that television is where “it’s at,” For the purposes of this analysis, the serialized drama is what will be investigated, determining the kinds of elements involved in a typical script for one of these stories and the potential that provides.

What is the difference between a serial and a procedural drama? A procedural drama is a show where each episode consists of self-contained or stand-alone stories. In each episode, we are introduced with a specific circumstance that the characters must work to resolve by the end of the episode. 16 This includes shows such as C.S.I., House, or Arrow. While there can be season long arcs or storylines, particularly for characters, the general format of each episode is that a new threat or problem is introduced. Generally speaking, any viewer should be able to tune in and be able to pick

15 (Child, 2014)
16 (Seriable, 2014)
up what is going on without watching any prior episodes. In Arrow for example, we have the season long arc for the first season where Oliver Queen is trying to cross the names off his father’s list and stop a plot to destroy the city, but we are still introduced with a new villain or threat in each episode. While Oliver may have disagreements with some of the supporting characters such as his mother or sister, these quarrels are usually resolved by the end of the episode, unless it benefits the season long arc.

A serial drama refers to a show that comprises overarching storylines and character issues that develop over the course of a season or series. This covers shows such as Breaking Bad, True Detective or The Sopranos. With all of these programs, we have a story that is slowly unfolded episode after episode, with a plot point introduced in one episode very rarely solved by the end. Unlike procedural dramas, these particular shows are very hard for someone who hasn’t watched from the beginning to sit down and tune in, as they are thrown in right in the middle of a story that’s constantly unfolding, without the background information or character history to use as reference.

Arguably the most important part of writing a television series is nailing the pilot script. A pilot episode is a script written to be the first episode of a series and is a “selling tool used to illustrate what the television series is about and how it works,” 17 There are two main guidelines for what a pilot script should achieve. It needs to prove your series has longevity, that there is vast potential for where the story could go and it’s not going to get stale. The second guideline is that it needs to illuminate how every episode of the series will work, in terms of the entire format and world of the show. This is a particularly important aspect to keep in mind, as it needs to make a believable world for future events to happen in. For example, if your show was to feature supernatural elements later in the season or even further down the line, there ideally needs to be a hint in the pilot that this is the kind of world where supernatural things could potentially happen. Lost played a dangerous game with this concept, as the seasons went on more and more outlandish

17 (Klems, 2008)
scenarios began to present themselves. This is still partially in the realm of believability, as the circumstances behind the plane crash in the pilot are very mysterious, and in the second part of the pilot we get our first glimpse of the polar bear on the island.

Like a film script, a pilot should aim to hook the viewer; and before that the network, within the first ten minutes. In these ten minutes we should meet our main character or characters, establish some sense of the setting and give an indication as to what sort of story we can expect later in the pilot and in future episodes. In Breaking Bad’s pilot, we see just enough to get us intrigued. Pants flying through the air, a man in a gas mask speeding through the desert in an RV, with three bodies sliding around. We meet our protagonist Walter White, who lets us know that he’s a married man with a son who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and enough information to know that he’s done something to get into trouble with the law. This leaves us wanting to find out how he got into this situation, and where he goes from here.

In The Newsroom opening, we see our protagonist Will McAvoy straight away, sitting on a stage being quizzed about various political issues, learning that he is in a position of some political influence. We soon find out that he’s a news-anchor that’s made a career out of staying neutral. We notice that he thinks he sees a woman in the crowd, somebody who appears to be significant to him and encourages him to speak up. Then we are treated to Will letting his opinion run rampant, setting the stage for what we can assume is a much-less neutral Will McAvoy in the future.

With both these openings, we get a strong idea of where each series can head. We know that Breaking Bad is about a middle-aged man who is on the wrong side of the law and is scared for his life. We know that The Newsroom is about a news anchor that is going to start being a bit more opinionated and controversial. Both of these openings establish a world where there is huge potential for where the story can go and are very effective at drawing the audience in to view the rest of the episode.
For a sixty-minute long television series, this usually results in between forty-two and fifty-five minutes of actual story, taking potential advertisements into account depending on the network. For a traditional program with commercials, these generally fall into the turnover points of each act, with television usually taking on the form of a Four or Five-Act structure. “The overall shape of each act, however, with its setup and rising action leading to a climax mirrors that of all storytelling. Whether it’s a film, a television pilot or just good gossip, well-told stories have a beginning, a middle and an end,” 18

The Five-Act structure begins with act one, introducing the world of the story, the principal characters and the main conflict of the series. From here it moves into Acts Two and Three, which make up the bulk of the script. These acts serve to deepen the audience’s emotional investment in the story, with characters motivations and backstories fleshed out. Subplots are introduced, and both acts end with a cliffhanger to enter a commercial break. From here Act Four brings the rising action of the story to a climax and introduces some form of twist, either succession followed by a new threat or failure followed by a new opportunity. Finally we end with Act Five, which concludes the story for that particular episode, bringing the audience involvement to a satisfying end while also teasing towards the next episode. For obvious reasons, Act Five is treated differently in a serial drama versus a procedural; with act five not really concluding the story but just teasing the next episode.

While this Five-Act Structure is a great guideline for a traditional show with commercial breaks, it creates a hard guideline to follow for series that don’t have to deal with breaks, such as programs on HBO or Netflix. This is when the Four Act Structure tends to take over, combining Acts Two and Three into one, and avoiding unnecessary cliffhangers to transition between acts, while usually still following the guidelines for the other acts.

18 (Livingston, 2011)
Like the Three-Act structure in film, the Four and Five-Act structures are not strict rules that need to be followed for a television episode, as sometimes it creatively suits the series to take a different structure. A strong example of this is *True Detective*. While the argument could be made that individual episodes follow the four-act structure, instead it should be broken down across the whole series. It was conceived as an eight episode series from the get-go, without a traditional pilot, and one whole cohesive story being concluded in the eight episodes. Star Matthew McConaughey describes it as more of a “360 page film script,” than it is a set of individual episode scripts, which leads to the case to be made that it fits the bill on a huge Three-Act Structure.

Conveniently, the three acts almost perfectly slot into the three time periods the show takes place in. Act One takes place in 1995, with Rustin Cohle and Marty Hart taking on a murder case and believing they have tracked down the man responsible. Act Two takes place in 2002, Rust encounters new evidence that suggests maybe they didn’t catch the right man back in 1995, and that the real killer is still out there. This leads to a falling out between Rust and Marty. Finally Act Three takes place in 2012, where Rust and Marty reunite to pick up old evidence to track down their man, now almost certain they had gotten the wrong one in 1995.

“True character is revealed in the choices a human being makes under pressure - the greater the pressure, the deeper the revelation, the truer the choice to the character’s essential nature,” 19 While certainly true for film, this idea is extremely important for a serialized drama. Because without getting glimpses of the true nature of the characters within a program, there is not a compelling reason to come back and revisit these characters week to week. With a film, the character is gone after two hours with them. With a television show, years could be spent with a single character.

19 (Mckee, 1997)
For a serialized drama television series, an interesting aspect of character to explore is ‘The Shadow’. The Shadow is described as the “hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt-laden personality whose ultimate ramifications reach back into the realm of our animal ancestors and so comprise the whole historical aspect of the unconscious,” or in simpler terms, is what is perceived as the dark side of the human personality, where urges such as lust, envy, greed and rage reside.

For a character in a serial drama in particular, it gives a character room to grow and possibly seek redemption from the actions of this darker side over the course of a few seasons, or slowly let the darker side of their personality consume them. By having these protagonists let the ‘Shadow’ loose from time to time, we’re given characters whose morality doesn’t fall on the usual black or white, which makes for a much more interesting character. Nobody wants to root for the guy who constantly does good things, never slips up and never fails.

We actually see this aspect of character explored in the main characters of many modern serial dramas. *Mad Men* has Don Draper, a man who runs a successful advertising company, but is a frequent adulterer. *Sons of Anarchy* has Jax Teller, a man who wants to make a better life by his family but is constantly drawn in by the violence of his motorcycle club. *House of Cards* has Frank Underwood, who climbs his way up the political ladder, lying, manipulating and even murdering to do so.

With *Breaking Bad’s* Walter White and *True Detective’s* Rustin Cohle, we actually have two characters where their shadow actually takes on the form of an alter ego; Heisenberg and Crash respectively. When Walter White becomes Heisenberg, he goes from the mild-mannered husband, father and teacher, to the ruthless drug kingpin who is driven by greed and power, murdering and manipulating to achieve his goals. When Rustin Cohle becomes Crash, he goes from being a fairly straight edged detective, to fully

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(Diamond, 2012)
committing to his undercover persona, stealing drugs, taking drugs and committing an armed robbery just to potentially get information on his case. He’s the version of Rust that has fully cut loose, and will do anything to further the case.

This isn’t to say that the lead character of a successful serial drama has to be a male. There are in fact plenty of these shows with strong female leads, also capable of exhibiting the ‘Shadow’. Shows like *Homeland, Scandal* or *Revenge* all feature an empowered; but damaged, female lead that should fit right alongside characters such as Don Draper or Frank Underwood. The problem with the female leads is they all tend to share one weakness: men. It seems despite whatever problems each of these female characters have, the problem with their love life always seems to take centre stage. In *Scandal*, Olivia Pope spends a season covering up her affair with the President of the United States. In *Homeland*, Carrie Mathison is the only one to believe Sergeant Nicholas Brody is secretly a terrorist, investigating him so closely that she falls in love with him, and later refuses to believe he was behind a bombing when all evidence points towards it. Sure, men in television tend to make irrational decisions regarding women as well. “But these men usually make “sacrifices” in order to “protect” their girlfriends or wives. Their seemingly idiotic actions are meant to be heartwarming and heroic. Not so for the women. Characters surrounding Olivia and Carrie tell the two women over and over again that they’re making destructive, selfish decisions,” 21 which they are, but is disregarded in the name of “love”. It appears that when it comes to finding a television series with a strong female lead where their romance is only a subplot and not the focus, the choices are few and far between.

Setting is another huge aspect not just serialized dramas, but in television of all genres. Like the characters, the audience needs a place to call home and be familiar with. Whether it’s *Central Perk* in *Friends* or *Maclarens Pub* in *How I Met Your Mother*, there needs to be a location the audience can identify

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21 (Dockterman, 2013)
with. “This is the place where the show is asking you to spend an hour every week, and it's usually focused on the handful of sets that the show spent a lot of money building. So are these places going to be fun to hang out in? Is there a fun bar or coffee shop where you're going to enjoy watching some zany banter? Is there a cool HQ or control room?” 22

More specifically, in the serial dramas, entire cities and states often take centre stage over individual location, as different environments build on the very specific atmospheres the show is after. In the case of Breaking Bad and True Detective, the setting almost becomes a character, as entire cities and states have such life breathed into them that the viewer feels like they personally know the area.

While Breaking Bad still has familiar individual locations to familiarize with such as Walter's house pictured earlier, the city of Albuquerque is almost essential to the plot. Travelling mere minutes from the city the characters can find themselves in total isolation from the world in the surrounding deserts, which suits many of their endeavors perfectly. “In many ways, Breaking Bad is a show about borders, about lines in the sand its characters draw for themselves and each other, and about what it means to cross those lines,” 23 With that in mind, it’s not hard to see how the city on the edge of the Chihuahuan desert benefits the themes of the story. Even as Walt is in the city leading a civilian life, the desert and his second life are never too far away.

Similarly, True Detective uses its backdrop of Louisiana to great effect at setting the mood and tone for the show. Gloomy trees, barren fields and vast swamps all constantly dominate the show’s scenery as the two detectives travel statewide in their investigation, all with an eerie silence and emptiness to it. Straying away from natural aspects, the show also delves into its fair share of run down bars and strip clubs, which provide a stark contrast to the unpopulated scenery otherwise featured. As the season went on however, the

22 (Anders, 2012)
23 (Riley, 2013)
more rural parts of Louisiana progressively dominated it again. Part of the fun of *True Detective* was that “the real villain was not Santeria, incest, or white trash poverty, it was the mismanaged and inhospitable Louisiana terrain. And in the season finale, as Cohle plunges into the wilderness in blind pursuit of the killer, we fear the unfamiliar land as much as we do the actions of a psychopath,” 24

While certainly not all the components of a pilot script, these are the most important aspects to think about when constructing one. It’s important to hook the audience in the first ten minutes, while proving that your series has longevity and clarifying how each episode of the series will work. Unless you’re planning on writing the next *True Detective* or a similar miniseries, the Four or Five-Act structure is a fantastic format for a pilot script. Creating a strong lead character is very important, and exploring the idea of the ‘Shadow’ opens a whole realm of possibilities, particularly in making your character more relatable with their imperfections. If choosing a female lead, it is a smart idea to make any romance they have a smaller aspect of their lives, and refuse to bow down to the industry standard of women making silly decisions. Finally, creating a world that sets the atmosphere for the show is extremely important, as you need somewhere where the audience can invest themselves into every week. When all these aspects are taken into account in a script, it provides a strong argument for the case that television is the writer’s medium, as it allows a lot more time for the world and character’s to be explored in depth, allowing for a lot more storytelling potential.

24 (Lingo, 2014)
Kleptos is a serialized drama set in small town New Zealand, following the exploits of a group of middle class bogans following a robbery into their home. The show explores the lengths these young men are willing to go to in order to recover their property when the authority figures fail them, awakening a new passion and hobby inside of them when they discover that the art of burglary provides a thrill unmatched by the legal boundaries of society. The first episode plays out like many other serialized dramas, introducing the main characters and the situation that they have found themselves in, and setting up a host of storylines for future episodes to explore, mainly dealing with the repercussions of a burglary our protagonists commit in the pilot episode. It is at this point where the storyline splits into individual character plotlines and the unique nature of the show reveals itself, as audience feedback via social media will determine what episode is screened on television the following week.

There will be seven episodes in the entire season, with a pilot episode and finale focusing on all the characters, and five individual character pieces in the weeks between. The first; or last depending on audience choices, of these stories focuses on the chief protagonist Ryan, a good natured but easily persuaded young man who is reluctantly dragged into the life of a criminal by his closest friends, but discovering a darker side to himself in the process when he relishes the rush of claiming possessions. His long time friends Cliff and Eddie each have their own story arcs in an individual episode as well, with the eager, violent and outgoing Cliff facing a crisis of character when things don’t pan out as hoped for him from the initial robbery, and the manipulative and cunning Eddie seeing these events as an opportunity for him to deal with personal events in his own life by shaping the actions of those around him. Ryan’s relatively fresh girlfriend Stacey will also serve as the focus of an episode, exploring the damage that the lies and secrets has on aspects of his personal life, as well as granting a glimpse into the darker side she also possesses when we witness some of the subtle ways she influences others to fit her idea of the “perfect life”. Finally, the last of these
individual character pieces follows Nick, the victim of the first burglary of the series, targeted due to an apparent personal vendetta. This episode will focus on shifting audience perceptions of the characters, revealing information that suggests Nick wasn’t quite the bad guy he was portrayed to be initially, and that his role as a victim suggests that there are two sides to every story that should be considered.

At the conclusion of each of these initial episodes, the audience will be presented with a list of all the characters who’s arc is still to come, and encourages them to tweet in which character’s story they’d like to see unfold in the following week. This may be presented in such a manner that audiences are unaware of the influence this social media interaction will have, only knowing that it will play a significant role in the shape of the season, leaving the more keen observers to figure out how the game works. Following the individual character pieces comes the finale episode, where we’ll see all of the previous storylines intersect fully amongst each other, bringing all of the individual character arcs to a boiling point and an exciting conclusion.

While it is simple to write this format concept off as a cheap gimmick, it’s important to look at the significant benefits this social media integration can have on the storytelling medium, shaping the overall arc in a truly unique but still cohesive manner as each episode reveals key details among each other depending on the viewing order. Some of the greatest episodes of television have been those that focus on singular characters and truly interrogate the psychological makeup of these characters, and Kleptos seeks to test audiences on whether these small character moments can form the entire basis of a serialized television show, and be arranged in any order to create a truly satisfying sequence of events.
Case Study – The Affair

The idea of several storylines running parallel in television shows is hardly a fresh concept. A large amount of serialized character focused dramas delve into this narrative structure, setting up one character’s arc to be played out in one part of an episode or across whole episodes, then another character is focused on. Television shows such as *Breaking Bad*, *Lost* or *The Walking Dead* have used this narrative framing to great effect, often exploring the timeline of an individual character before rewinding to see how another character has been occupying themselves during the same time frame.

That being said, the idea behind *Kleptoes* is that these individual character arcs are actually designed to be played in any order, and make sense no matter the order these are played in. The storylines of these characters will crossover in parts, and small details may be revealed in certain perspectives of a scene that were glanced over when viewed from another character’s perspective. This opens a very interesting concept that can potentially be explored, where the same scene actually plays out very differently in terms of action and dialogue depending on whose perspective we are watching from.

It is this concept of multiple perspectives with the trope of the unreliable narrator that is explored and crafted in great detail in Showtime’s 2014 drama *The Affair*. The premise of this show is explained right there in the title, focusing on an affair that begins between two individuals who are both married to different people, and the lies and deceit that dominate their lives as they struggle to keep their family life free from their indecencies. Despite the fairly generic sounding plot, *The Affair* keeps things extremely fresh with it’s relatively unique narrative format, where each episode consists of two parts, one from each of the two main characters perspective, and shows the days events the way each of them remember it.

The unreliable narrator trope is particularly strong here, as the narrative largely takes place as a reflection on the affair from the future versions of the
main characters. This allows a huge amount of freedom in making the same scene play out differently across the perspectives, as it suggests the idea that they remember things very differently, often glorifying themselves in their own memories, and even that one of our narrators may be lying to us. For example, Noah Solloway appears to us as a charming, sincere and thoughtful man when we view scenes from his perspective, initially resisting the temptation of the affair when Alison Bailey tries to seduce him. From this perspective, Alison appears to be a very happy-go-lucky type of girl and is the one who initiates the majority of the flirting between the two of them; almost making it her goal from the moment they first meet to initiate a romance with him. However, when we watch from Alison’s perspective in the second part of every episode, we see the same scenes play out in a completely different manner, where Noah comes across as quite cocky and sleazy, while Alison appears to be more of the damaged individual who tries to fight her attraction to this man valiantly in the early stages of their relationship.

The relevance this has to Kleptoes is simple; The Affair proves the intriguing value that can develop from seeing the same scene play out quite differently in terms of the scene action and dialogue. Kleptoes features multiple scenes where characters crossover in their individual episodes, showing that there is indeed room for the unreliable narrator trope to make a presence in the narrative framework of the show. However, just because this concept plays out extremely well in one show, does that mean that any show focusing on individual character timelines crossing over will automatically benefit from it?

Not necessarily, and in the case of Kleptoes it could almost prove to be a hindrance to the overall story by making it too complicated for the audience to understand. The reason The Affair is able to make this concept work so effectively is the nature of the story, which has the benefit of hindsight. By setting the narrative up as a recollection of past events by the two main characters, it makes the doubt and confusion felt by the audience at which version to believe that much more effective, as one of them could be remembering details falsely or outright lying. In addition to this, the season
plays out to center around a murder mystery and our lead characters' knowledge of it, which means the secrecy and doubt is extremely interesting for the audience as they can attempt to figure out themselves what’s gone on, based on the hints provided by each version of the story.

Unlike *The Affair*, *Kleptoes* isn’t strictly centered around the audience trying to figure out what’s going on, so the drastic change in perspectives could prove jarring to audience members and make them focus on the wrong things. This particular program is more based on how these seemingly average people deal with the extreme circumstances they find themselves in, rather than trying to figure out who can’t be trusted. While there are certainly questions raised that won’t be answered until another episode; or depending on the order questions answered before they’ve even been asked, by the time the final episode plays out and the timelines are all converged there should be no doubt about the events that have transpired, simply a desire to witness what happens next. *The Affair* also excels in this respect because of it’s limit to two perspectives, things could get a little cluttered as soon as events transpire from the views of five different main characters.
Kleptos
Story Notes, Outlines and Feedback
**Story Memos**

- The first major pitfall I see in terms of writing a series that has so many spinning plates is a lack of second eyes, where I’m viewing the series as a whole based on the order I’m writing them in. This is something I can’t really avoid, as I have to choose someone to start with. As Ryan is intended to be my main character, and the one whose presence is felt throughout the rest, I chose him as the first to write. From here I drew up a chart of the characters locations and actions on certain days, throwing in where they were and why based on their interactions in Ryan’s episode. Basically, there is going to have to be a feedback stage where several respondents read the series in a different order to the one I’ve written in, and can confirm whether the series makes sense in that order.

- Due to the nature of the show, there is an overwhelming urge to just throw all of the characters together in as many opportunities as possible, to really capitalize on the crossover potential. However, as outlined in the section on “The Affair”, it doesn’t really suit the nature of the show to have the same scene play out with drastic differences depending on character perspective. Without that aspect, all you end up with is the same scene with very slight differences across multiple episodes, which isn’t exactly the most thrilling television to watch. The whole point of the individual character episodes is to see what these characters are doing outside of the group dynamic and the secrets they are keeping from each other, so it actually seems best to keep the crossover scenes to a minimum, enough to acknowledge these characters still influence one another without boring the viewers with repeated scenes. The better approach is to have teases to each other, such as a scene in Eddie’s episode where a cop who comes around to investigate is actually Stacey’s father, who has been pushed into investigating their case by Stacey.

- Stacey originally has a very small role in the pilot, only serving as Ryan’s girlfriend, but there is actually a lot of storytelling potential behind how his significant other reacts to the lies surrounding his nighttime activities.
Because of this, Stacey has become one of the five main characters receiving their own episode, which means that the pilot needs to be changed to give her a larger role, and therefore a more compelling character to focus an episode on. With Nick it makes sense, as he fills the role of the apparent antagonist in the pilot, which means people want to see what’s going on in his life and watch as the roles may be reversed when we witness his version of events.

With Stacey, there currently isn’t enough of a draw for her episode to be an exciting option for any audience voters.

- With regards to this, the pilot may need to be altered a bit from it’s original conception to make all the characters seem as compelling so they’re all a good option for audience voters. From the initial pilot, my instinct would be to see Eddie or Cliff’s episodes first, as they’re the ones who seemingly have impending consequences in regards to their first robbery, whilst Ryan seems to have come away scot free and rather happy about how things played out. This may not be as much of an issue as I believe, so will see how this plays out when feedback is given.

- I have mild concerns that people may feel Ryan, Eddie and Cliff are all very similar; all being young white males who have a habit of cursing, but this may be a case of being too close to look at it objectively. I ideally wanted to explore in each of their episodes what their motivations are for why they steal, so I tried to steer the story in a direction that explains why they do what they do. After his initial reservations, Ryan is actually the one who steals for fun, as we see by his excitement after the first robbery goes off without a hitch in his eyes. Cliff steals for money, as his unemployment gets the better of him. And we will see Eddie’s motivations explored fully in his episode, where he uses theft as a way to send a message and screw people over. We’ll also see the different ways the three of them deal with their conflict. Ryan will argue with words. Cliff will jump to violence. Eddie will set out to destroy that person’s life.

- While not a “main” character, Hannah needs to be a driving force behind several of the plotlines, as we gradually discover the part she plays in
the events that unfold. She plays a large role in Cliff and Nick’s episodes, but there will be seeds of her true nature planted throughout the other episodes; particularly Stacey’s, as a female who has her head screwed on might be more likely to see through her façade.

- Should there be a character in the pilot who appears to be the least interesting and therefore least likely to get voted by audience members, (in the initial draft this is likely to be Stacey), that character needs something big to happen in their episode to make up for it. If a character comes across as dull in the pilot; which hopefully shouldn’t be the case, there needs to be something in their individual episode that hooks the viewer back in.

- I roughly have the ending episode planned out, and have significant roles in mind for Ryan, Eddie, Cliff and Nick, meaning the problem is once again Stacey. I’m finding it extremely hard to find a reason why a character who’s main role is the main characters girlfriend to play a large role in the “big score” of the season. Her role could fall into one of two traps. The first is that of the suspicious girlfriend actively trying to discover what her boyfriend is doing, potentially coming off crazy and not as a strong female character, and very reminiscent of Season 1 and 2 Skyler White in Breaking Bad. The second is that of the girlfriend who knows what her boyfriend is up to, stays with him regardless but aims to be the voice of reason for him, which is reminiscent of Season 4 and 5 Skyler White. The more cliché route to take is she gets fully involved in the crime, which almost doesn’t suit the character and doesn’t create any conflict or tension with Ryan, which is undesirable. Perhaps this will become clearer after her episode is written.

- Getting picky here, but it’s been bought to my attention that Kleptos comes across more as “Klep-toss” than “Klep-tows” as I intended, which is supposed to be derived from Kleptomaniacs. I’m stylizing it as Kleptoes, which should make it clear how it is pronounced, and spelling it in a fashion that I would expect some of the bogan characters to spell it.
- Despite there being five individual character episodes, the main character of the show is 100% Ryan. This will be very clear in the pilot and finale episodes, where he will take the majority of the focus and be the point of relation for the audience, but may not be as clear in the individual episodes. I will need to find a way that his presence is felt throughout all of the episodes, which I have worked towards with him being the one to encourage subsequent robberies.

- If I decide that I do want to explore scenes playing out differently from different perspectives, this is something I can do when writing the actual script, achieving this mostly with dialogue.
Episode: Pilot
We begin in a flashforward, watching our protagonist Ryan Meyers and one of his best friends Cliff Jackson sit and wait in a van parked on the side of the road. Cliff is in the driver’s seat and Ryan in the passenger’s, the van blacked out without any lights on and all the windows rolled up. While Cliff calmly eats from a bag of chips listening to rock music on the radio, Ryan looks around the street anxiously, keeping an eye out for any sign of movement. His phone suddenly ringing gives him a fright; looking at the screen he realizes it’s his “sort-of-girlfriend” Stacey Kelly. He appears reluctant to answer the phone, and Cliff suggests he shouldn’t, but fearing that she may find it suspicious Ryan answers the phone.

Stacey asks what Ryan is up to, and Ryan searches for a response from Cliff, who is ignoring the conversation and is fixed on the road ahead. Ryan claims to her that he’s just out with some of the guys, and when she presses the issue announces its people she doesn’t know. He tells her they’ll catch up later and puts an end to the conversation, which Cliff finds amusing. Cliff raises his voice and Ryan panics, urging Cliff to keep his voice down. Cliff tells Ryan there’s nothing to worry about and that Ryan should lighten up.

Cliff asks Ryan which mask he would like, confusing Ryan, as he believed they were simply there on a recon mission. As he pressures Cliff for an explanation, a drunken middle-aged man pulls out of the driveway in front of them and swerves off down the road. Cliff pulls out his phone and calls their friend Eddie Terry, telling him that the old man has left and they’re going to move in, leading to protest from Ryan as he stresses to Cliff they were just having a look. Cliff removes the keys from the ignition and tells Ryan that he can either wait in the car or grab a mask and help him inside the house. Ryan angrily slams the dashboard, before grabbing himself a mask and following Cliff up the driveway beside them, nervously scanning the surrounding neighborhood as he does so.

**TITLE SEQUENCE**

We return to the present day, where Ryan sits on the bed in his room in the very early hours of the morning, surrounded by empty drawers, their contents and loose items scattered off his desk. Eddie comes in and asks
what's missing, and Ryan informs him he's missing his laptop, television and other goods, the result of a burglary. The two of them move to Cliff's room to compare their losses with him, discovering they've all lost a similar set of items. Between the three of them, they quickly establish that there are no broken windows or locks in the house, and the thieves must've entered through their bathroom window that was left unlocked. Tired and angry, they agree that nothing can be done at 3am in the morning, and resolve to contact the authorities in the morning.

As Ryan stands in the kitchen and fries up some breakfast, Cliff has an unproductive conversation with a police officer on the phone. The police inform them that it's unlikely they'll be able to send someone over, as they're otherwise preoccupied and feel that they won't have anything to go on for an investigation. Eddie arrives in the front door, and explains that one of their neighbors saw a black Honda Civic hanging around for a few hours while they were out last night, as Ryan informs him that they're not covered by insurance since it wasn't forced entry.

Stacey arrives and is shocked to discover an empty space where the TV once was in the lounge, the boys promptly explaining the situation, and shutting down her suggestions of contacting the police and insurance companies. Stacey expresses concern that the boys are going to take matters into their own hands, and Ryan pulls her away to his room to gently reassure her that despite the fact Ryan is constantly dragged into shenanigans by his friends, he won't have any part of reclaiming their property on their own.

The boys drive over to Travis' place; a friend of Cliff and Eddie's who deals in stolen property, to find out if he knows anyone who might've played a part in this burglary. On the way they notice an overwhelming number of black Honda Civics, proving to be a large obstacle in their lead. Despite protest from Ryan that they should go to the police, and nervousness at dealing with Travis who famously isn't fond of Ryan, Cliff and Eddie insist this is the best course of action for them to take.
The boys arrive at Travis’ house in time to see him herding a pair of Jehovah’s Witnesses off his property, threatening them to never return. Travis’ anger drops completely once he realizes he has guests, excitedly ushering them inside, while noticeably disappointed when he realizes Ryan has joined them.

He takes them inside and proceeds to show off his new home theatre system to Cliff and Eddie while Ryan takes in his surroundings, astonished by a slightly overweight girl on the couch with a blanket barely covering her nipples somehow not woken up by the deafening music. Travis tells her to wake up while he goes to grab beers for everyone, she introduces herself as Megan and instantly takes a liking to Ryan, requesting he seats himself on the couch next to her.

The boys explain their situation to Travis, who expresses outrage that anybody would steal from his friends in what he calls “his town”. He offers for them to stick around for beers and a barbecue, much to Megan’s excitement and Ryan’s dismay, with the group leaving hours later in a cab; Megan’s phone number scribbled reluctantly across Ryan’s hand.

The boys return home and grab some more beers, playing a game of pool in their garage. When Eddie expresses anger over the situation, Ryan rationalizes it that there’s nothing they can do, all their leads are cold and that maybe it’s best to just move on. When Eddie and Cliff tease him about Megan, Ryan loses his cool with them, announcing he’s going to bed.

Cliff parks up his van outside the front gates of a high school, attracting the attention of one of the teachers manning the gate. As a school bell rings, a schoolgirl approaches his van, climbing into the passenger seat, shocking the teacher. When the teacher expresses his concern at their students hopping into a vehicle with a strange man, the girl; Hannah, announces that Cliff isn’t a strange man but is in fact her boyfriend, and the two of them shoot the teacher down when he kicks up a fuss, driving off and leaving the teacher flustered at the gate.

Hannah and Cliff sit down at a café ready for lunch, and Hannah complains about a guy named Nick in her class. When Cliff enquires about
what his problem is, Hannah casually mentions how cool Nick thinks he is with his Honda Civic, capturing Cliff’s attention.

Ryan is on a worksite, chatting as he works with his Samoan colleague Jerome, as Jerome pesters Ryan about when he’s going to meet Stacey. They are interrupted by Cliff’s van screaming into the worksite with a flurry of gravel and dust, pulling up and announcing to Ryan that he knows who took their stuff. He explains that he believes Nick is the culprit, because Nick has an issue with Hannah, and by extension, Cliff. Before Ryan has a chance to get more details out of him, Cliff is chased off the worksite by Ryan’s boss Dean, who also happens to be Ryan’s father. Dean angrily addresses Ryan that he needs to keep his friends away from his worksites.

Ryan arrives home to find Cliff and Eddie excitedly discussing the latest information, as Hannah looks on. They decide that they’ll go round to Nick’s house the following night and scope it out; with Hannah pitching in that Nick only lives with his father. Ryan announces that he’s not going to be a part of this, leading to an argument between them, with Ryan on one side claiming this isn’t who they are or what they do while Eddie and Cliff believe it is well within their rights to take their property back, as the authority figures have failed them. Despite their persuasion, Ryan apologizes and declares he can’t join them in this.

Ryan is working alongside his father, and explaining the whole situation with the robbery to him. Dean admits he knew it was only a matter of time something bad happened with the deadbeats Ryan hangs out with, and scolds him on his lack of drive, ambition and apparent content at simply “getting by” in life. Dean advises that it’s time for Ryan to be a man, acknowledge what he wants in life and what he has to do to get it. In a horrendous misinterpretation of his father’s advice, Ryan returns home after work and tells his friends he will get involved after all.

As Cliff and Ryan wait outside Nick’s house in the van, Eddie pulls up into a carpark in the middle of town, having followed Nick there from his house. He
watches as Nick heads into the pub. As he does, he receives the phone call from Cliff informing him that the father has gone out and the two of them are heading into the house to investigate. Eddie tells them he’ll find a way to stall Nick, and heads over the car park to let his tire down.

Ryan and Cliff reach the backdoor of the house, and Cliff immediately looks to break the window with his elbow. Ryan stops him and whispers to him that they should look for a key first, finding a spare key under the doormat almost immediately. The two of them head inside and Cliff doesn’t hesitate to turn the lights on, much to the chagrin of Ryan. They are pleasantly surprised however, to discover all of their possessions neatly arranged in one of the bedrooms, all ready for the taking. Cliff removes his mask and tells Ryan to pull the van up the driveway and they can load it right out the bedroom window, and he jogs out to pull the van around.

Ryan hops in the van and removes his mask, then slowly reverses into the driveway with no headlights. He backs up until he reaches the window that Cliff has just thrown open, killing the engine and running back to begin loading all the stolen property into the van as Cliff passes it out the window. Ryan throws the last of it in the van then leans in to ask Cliff whether it’s the last of it, only to find him pulling out drawers and cabinets and ransacking the place, claiming he’s looking for something expensive.

Back at the carpark, Eddie sees Hannah; Cliff’s girlfriend, walk out of the bar, closely followed by Nick. Eddie appears confused for a moment, watching as the two share heated words, then Hannah storms off and Nick returns inside the bar. A little while later, Nick walks out and crosses the road, hopping in his car. As he tries to reverse out he notices the flat tire, cursing and starting to get out the tools to change it. Eddie goes over to help, telling Nick he has far better tools, engaging Nick in conversation and distracting him as he does so.

Ryan goes into the house to confront Cliff, finding that he’s still ransacking the place looking for something expensive. Cliff explains that this whole invasion wasn’t about getting even, but getting some compensation out of it. When Ryan puts up a fight, Cliff informs Ryan he’s lost his job, and that he needs something to sell to Travis if he even wants to be able to pay rent.
Eddie continues to distract Nick, who begins to show frustration at how long a simple tire change is taking.

Ryan half-heartedly searches some drawers and decides he can’t find anything worthwhile. He rejoins Cliff in the living room, who has found an arrangement of goods, including an expensive and ornate looking bowie knife that captures Ryan’s attention to an almost trance-like state. He snaps out of it when Cliff tells him to take this stuff to the van while he searches the last room. Ryan takes his armload of goods out to the van, fires it up and pulls out into the road, just in time to escape the father’s Ford Falcon pulling back into the driveway.

Inside the house, Cliff enters the last bedroom he hasn’t checked. As he begins investigating the room, he hears a click and a small bedside lamp lights up, a 9 year old boy resting his finger on the switch. After maintaining terrified eye contact for a moment, Cliff backs out of the room and the boy calmly turns off his bedside lamp and goes back to sleep.

Cliff then hears the front door open, and narrowly avoids getting seen by the father by ducking behind the nearest couch. As the father enters the kitchen, drunkenly stumbling to the fridge and grabbing a beer, Cliff maneuvers his way towards the window where they had loaded the van, slinking out quietly and jogging down the driveway. He climbs into the van and dismisses Ryan’s questions about whether he’d been seen, and the two drive off down the road.

At the carpark, Eddie finishes his tire change, bids Nick farewell, and then rings Cliff and Ryan to inform them Nick is returning.

In the van, Ryan begins to show excitement that they’ve pulled it off, while Cliff is a bit more hesitant to celebrate given his encounter with the small child.

As Eddie hops into his own vehicle and starts to set off home to meet up with the others, he’s greeted by a strange man knocking on his window. A man angrily enquiring why Eddie let Nick’s tire down.
Episode: Ryan Meyers
THE NIGHT OF THE HEIST

Cliff and Ryan both throw open the back doors of the van, proudly looking upon their score for the night. They assess what extra goods they’ve acquired, trying to calculate some estimates for how much everything is worth. When they come to the expensive and ornate looking bowie knife, Cliff struggles to guess how much it’s worth. Ryan tells him it doesn’t matter how much it’s worth, out of everything they’ve scored, that’s the item they’re going to keep. Cliff attempts to put up an argument with Ryan over this declaration, before noticing a fire in Ryan’s eyes; this is something he’s not going to back down on.

TITLE SEQUENCE

Ryan sits down in front of their newly reacquired television, and turns it on to some sports. His phone starts to ring, and he notices it’s from Stacey. He picks up the phone, answering with a suave sense of confidence he hasn’t shown in the past. Stacey notices this, inquiring what’s happened that’s made Ryan feel so good. Ryan replies that it’s nothing in particular, stating that he’s simply changed his attitude when it comes to dwelling on things.

Cliff enters the room and admits he’s also noticed this new sense of confidence Ryan was showing off, in the hour since they performed their makeshift heist. Ryan then realizes they’re missing someone, asking Cliff if he’s heard from Eddie. Cliff looks out the window, congratulating Ryan on his impeccable timing, as Eddie’s car has just pulled into the driveway.

Eddie walks into the room, and appears distant, barely acknowledging Ryan and Cliff’s greetings as he enters. They finally grab his attention, asking him what’s wrong. Eddie laughs it off and asks what they managed to get with faked excitement. Cliff declares they got all their property back, plus a little bit extra, showing off a small duffel bag filled with the extra items. When Eddie asks what the plan is with these, Ryan is quick to make the call, they’re going to visit Travis.
THE DAY AFTER THE HEIST

Travis looks over the items he’s been shown, over and over again, pondering to himself, and scrawling on a small bit of paper. Eddie sits by his side, watching his thinking process, while Cliff stands by the door, drumming his feet on the ground impatiently. Ryan sits in the living room, Megan once again curling up beside him, peppering him with small talk. He deals her half-responses, focusing on Travis’ face as he muses over the goods.

Finally, Travis announces that he’s willing to give them $1500, $500 each. While Eddie and Cliff shake their head in agreement, Ryan stands up in protest, calling Travis out on his low asking price. Travis is quick to retaliate, asking Ryan what he knows about how this underground works, leaving Eddie to quickly step in and pull Travis aside, taking him out the back of the house to talk privately.

Cliff quickly challenges Ryan, asking him what his deal is. Ryan appeals to Cliff’s need for the money, stating that what they’ve got is worth far more than that and they deserve more. Eddie returns alone, stating that Travis is willing to go as high as $2000, but that’s his final offer. Ryan decides it’s his turn to talk to Travis in private, snapping at Eddie to back off when he tries to follow.

Ryan walks out the back door and asks Travis what the problem is. Travis is blunt with Ryan and replies that Ryan is the problem, and he’s not giving Ryan the price his guys usually get because he doesn’t trust Ryan and doesn’t want to encourage a future working relationship between them. He tells Ryan he doesn’t have the stomach to steal without being pushed into it by Cliff or Eddie.

Ryan takes this opportunity for a cheap shot against Travis, suggesting that Travis isn’t a man because he gets people to do his dirty work for him. Travis grabs him by the throat and slams him against the wall of the house, angrily telling Ryan to get off his property. Ryan walks out the front door, storming off down the street. Cliff yells after him that he’ll drive him home in the van, Ryan refuses, claiming he needs the walk.
Ryan arrives home to find $1000 in cash sitting on his bedside table, along with a note from Eddie that Travis gave them $3000 in the end.

Ryan and Stacey sit at a restaurant table together, looking over a menu. The restaurant is quite expensive looking, and the two of them have dressed up for the occasion. Stacey comments that this new place is supposed to be really nice, and Ryan agrees, stating that he’s wanted to come here for a while.

Stacey asks if they’ve heard anything from the cops about whether they’re going to come around, Ryan tells her that the cops came through for them and managed to get their stuff back. Stacey is delighted, praising the efficiency of the police officers.

As they leave the restaurant, Ryan pulls out a couple of hundred dollar notes to pay for the meal, much to Stacey’s surprise. When she quizzes him on where all this money has come from, she’s told he’s been working a lot of overtime lately and has a bit of money to spare. Stacey doesn’t inquire any further, and is more than happy to take the meal.

2 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

Ryan wakes up to a series of knocks on the door. He perks up in bed and listens for activity. He hears a series of footsteps approach the front door, then the murmur of conversation as Eddie addresses the visitor. The two converse for a moment, then shut the door. Ryan pokes his head out the door and asks Eddie who that was, Eddie explains that it was a cop, and that he dealt with it.

As Ryan and his father load up all of their tools into the van, Dean looks over and notices that Ryan has a spring in his step, his shoulders are stretched back with his head held high, and asks what’s got him so cheerful. Ryan tells him he thought a lot about what his father had said, and he’s going to make some changes in his life, become a new man.

On the drive back, Dean pressures Ryan as to when Ryan is going to bring Stacey over to meet the parents. Ryan asks how his father even knew
about that, as he’d never mentioned, and Dean confesses he’s heard Ryan talk to Jerome at work from time to time. Ryan tells his father it’s nothing serious, and that if it ever progresses to something more he’ll be sure to bring her around.

When Ryan walks into the house, he sees Eddie sitting on the couch watching television. Ryan grabs a beer for himself, offering Eddie one, who is oblivious to Ryan’s offer at first, before snapping out of his daze.

Ryan asks him what’s going on, and Eddie replies it’s nothing to worry about. Ryan apologizes for pressuring Travis the day before, but explains that he just believes they weren’t getting what they were owed. Eddie shrugs it off, smiling as he tells Ryan it doesn’t matter, they got the money and that was the end of things.

Ryan leans in close to Eddie and asks him if there’s any chance Eddie would want to rob another house. Eddie laughs him off, until he realizes Ryan’s face is dead serious, at which point he tells Ryan he’s being an idiot. Ryan explains that this is their opportunity to make a bit of extra cash and get some cheap thrills by doing so. Eddie continues to scold Ryan for even suggesting the idea, until Ryan mentions the idea that they can piss off people who’ve wronged them in the past. Eddie momentarily considers this notion, then tells Ryan they’ll talk later and walks out.

3 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

Ryan and Stacey are at a bar having a drink, laughing over something and getting extra cuddly compared to usual. Ryan almost spits his drink out when he sees Megan enter the bar, giving her a half-hearted smile when she spots him almost immediately.

She runs over, hugging Ryan and kissing him on the cheek, before Stacey introduces herself as Ryan’s girlfriend. Megan walks away, and when Stacey inquires who she is, Ryan confesses that Megan hit on him at Travis’ place. Stacey laughs it off, but when she sees Megan go into the bathroom, she follows, as Ryan obliviously waits at the table.
Stacey returns from the bathroom and leans in to make a very public demonstration about kissing Ryan, to his surprise. Ryan flashes her a stupid grin as he asks what that was for, and she replies no particular reason. The two grab their drinks and finish them; Ryan stands up and puts his jacket around Stacey who warmly thanks him. As they walk out of the bar, Ryan makes eye contact with Megan, who stares back with a blank expression.

Climbing into Ryan’s car, he asks Stacey whether she said anything to Megan. As they drive, Stacey claims that Megan told her she doesn’t deserve Ryan, and that Megan has him in her sights. Ryan shakes his head in disbelief. As they pull into Stacey’s driveway, she asks Ryan if he had sex with Megan. Ryan is quick to defend himself, stating he wouldn’t. The two argue, resulting in Stacey storming inside her house and Ryan fuming in the car.

Ryan drives home, visibly distressed by his argument with Stacey. He arrives home and sits in front of the television with a beer. He has a few beers, getting visibly drunk. Once he is at the point of stumbling to the door, he pulls out his phone and looks at Megan’s number, getting angry as he does so. Just as he goes to stand up, Cliff arrives home; looking extremely tired and beat up.

Ryan tells Cliff to come with him; Ryan needs to let off some steam, and the perfect way to manage that is to find an unsecure house to break into. Cliff shakes his head in disagreement, telling Ryan that there’s no way he’s going to go rob somebody’s place when Ryan is in a state like that.

Ryan doesn’t take the rejection kindly, beginning to tease Cliff about being afraid, and calling him out on the fact that Cliff is the one who needs the money. Cliff appears to be building a temper, but puts great effort into keeping his cool with Ryan, telling him tonight is not the right time, and that maybe he should go sleep it off. Ryan angrily walks out the front door, grabbing his hoody on the way out.

Ryan turns up on Megan’s front doorstep in the pouring rain, giving her a shock when she opens the door to find it’s him there. Her first question is how
he knows where she lives, but without invitation, he storms into her house and begins to verbally assault Megan, asking her what right she has to interfere in his private life and calling her a slut in the process.

As Ryan continues to hurl a torrent of abuse at her, Megan defends herself amicably, claiming that Megan did nothing of the sort, and Stacey is only making up these lies because she’s jealous. He takes a moment to process what she’s saying, getting more angry at her at first, before slowly coming to the realization that maybe Megan is innocent in all of this.

After making his decision on who is telling the truth, Ryan grabs Megan and begins to violently and passionately kiss her, and she pushes him off in shock. When he tries to lean in again she stops him, leading to him getting hostile and asking why she’s resistant now when she was all for it the other day. As he continues to try to kiss her, she explains this was before she knew he had a girlfriend, and especially before he came into her home verbally assaulting her. Struggling to maintain her temper, she calmly tells Ryan to get out of her house. He walks out, muttering to himself about how much of a tease she is as he slams the front door behind him.

Megan follows him out the front door, having finally lost her temper. She yells at Ryan that he needs to have an attitude check, and that maybe he isn’t the nice desirable guy he likes to think he is. When he tries to retaliate, he realizes he has nothing, and walks off into the rain.

As Ryan walks home he walks past a car outside someone’s property. He pauses, and leans in to wipe some of the rain off the window, peering inside the vehicle. Seeing nothing of value, he moves down the road to another car, repeating the process with several vehicles, until he spots one that has a laptop bag on the back seat, along with a small backpack and an expensive looking car stereo.

Ryan looks around, and spots a small construction site for a house. He jumps the fence and grabs a piece of steel rod, returning to the car, and promptly caving in the rear window, setting the alarm off almost immediately. He climbs in, quickly grabs the bags and yanks the stereo out of it’s slot, then runs into the construction site, jumping the fence at the back to escape.
Travis hears a knock at the door, and opens it up to find Ryan standing in the dimly lit porch, soaking wet from the rain with his items in hand. Ryan announces that he does have the stomach for it, walking inside and dropping his contents onto Travis’ table. Travis smiles at Ryan, nodding in appreciation.
Episode: Cliff Jackson
THE NIGHT OF THE HEIST

As the van grinds to a halt in front of the garage, Cliff barely acknowledges that they've come to a stop. Ryan climbs out and walks to the garage and opens it up, as Cliff blankly stares at the dashboard, a look of slight concern on his face. He jumps when Ryan bangs on the passenger window, encouraging Cliff to come outside and help him unload.

Cliff and Ryan both throw open the back doors of the van, Ryan looking extremely pleased with himself and Cliff appearing a little jumpy. They assess what extra goods they've acquired, trying to calculate some estimates for how much everything is worth. When they come to the expensive and ornate looking bowie knife, Cliff struggles to guess how much it's worth. When Ryan claims that he's going to keep it, and Cliff expresses his concern at holding onto anything incriminating, and that they should sell it all to Travis. Noticing that Ryan isn't going to back down on this, Cliff drops the issue, and Ryan begins hauling their findings inside.

Cliff brings his personal items back into his bedroom and returns them to their original positions. He plugs in his computer and fires it up, immediately bringing up the Internet browser and searching for Nick's social media profile. He clicks over several photos until he comes across one of Nick and his younger brother, noting the caption explaining that it's Nick and his brother Tom. Cliff focuses on the unenthusiastic smile of the young boy, his frustration brewing as he stares at the picture, before losing it and sending the contents of his desk scattering across his bedroom.

TITLE SEQUENCE

THE DAY AFTER THE HEIST

Cliff knocks on the front door of an expensive looking house in an extremely clean looking suburb, appearing extremely out of place in his trademark baggy jeans, hi tops and hoody. A man opens the door and takes a second to recognize Cliff, before storming out the door to wrap his nephew in a firm hug. Cliff laughs and greets his uncle Ray, asking how things are going,
his question ignored as his uncle ushers him inside and shuts the door behind him.

Ray brings over a coffee to Cliff, setting it down on the table in front of him. Cliff thanks him and takes a large sip, and the two share small talk about how things are going in their respective personal lives, with Ray showing particular interest in Cliff’s younger brother Brad. Cliff admits he wasn’t even sure Ray would be home on a workday and mentions his surprise that Ray even is. Ray explains that business is booming, the host of new subdivisions cropping up around town provides a landscaper such as himself with plenty of work. Ray inquires why Cliff isn’t at work, and Cliff confesses that he lost his job as an electrician, that his firm required downsizing and Cliff was first at the chopping block due to a rocky relationship with his boss.

Cliff then politely steers the conversation towards any job openings at Ray’s firm, who casually dismisses the idea, suggesting that business isn’t so hot after all. When Cliff presses the issue, Ray tries to change the subject, leading to Cliff getting slightly heated, curious why his uncle is so intent on dodging his queries. Ray sighs and admits that he’s fond of Cliff, and that family is important, but he’s heard whispers around town that Cliff makes a difficulty employee, constantly in disagreement with his superiors, and even suggests that a few of his own employees have all had conflicts with Cliff in the past at parties or at the pub. Cliff laughs in disbelief, both at the fact that he apparently has a bad reputation and that his uncle takes it so seriously. Cliff angrily declares that maybe his faith that Uncle Ray will help fix everything is misguided, that family isn’t so important after all. He storms out, walking across the freshly sown grass in the front yard on the way out.

Travis looks over the items he’s been shown, over and over again, pondering to himself, and scrawling on a small bit of paper. Eddie sits by his side, watching his thinking process, while Cliff stands by the door, drumming his feet on the ground impatiently, and Ryan sits in the lounge making awkward small talk with Megan.

Travis announces he’s willing to give them $1500 all up, $500 each to the three of them. Before Cliff gets a chance to accept the offer, Ryan pipes up that it’s not enough, demanding more. As Travis quickly moves to shut Ryan
down, Eddie steps in and drags Travis out the back of the house to talk in private.

Cliff challenges Ryan, asking why he’s so determined to spoil this. Ryan claims that Cliff of all people shouldn’t be happy with that offer, as being unemployed he needs the money the most and that they deserve more than what Travis is offering. Eddie returns and says that Travis will go to $2000 but that’s all he’ll do, sparking a heated response from Ryan, who storms out to talk to Travis himself.

Eddie pulls Cliff away from the nosy ears of Megan, explaining that there’s no way that Travis is going to budge on that $2000 offer, and that perhaps they should give Ryan $1000 to make him think Travis went higher, as Eddie and Cliff were both happy with $500 anyway. As Cliff considers this option, Eddie jokes that it’s not like Cliff needs the money anyway, blissfully unaware of his employment situation. Cliff grunts a fake laugh back, and then watches as Ryan angrily storms through the house and out the front door. Cliff follows him and offers Ryan a ride home, who refuses and claims he needs the walk. Cliff returns to Eddie and agrees that maybe Eddie’s suggestion is the best way to keep everyone happy.

Cliff stands out in the garage playing pool by himself, a few empty bottles of beer lining the table beside him and a half empty one resting on the edge of the pool table, getting sipped at in between shots. He looks up when he hears the door open and Hannah walks in, shutting the door behind her. She immediately looks to the empty beer bottles, and Cliff makes a small remark regarding maybe he should quit drinking since money is so tight. He moves in to give her a kiss as a greeting, and she shies away. He inquires what’s going on, and she quietly replies that Nick’s little brother saw him robbing their house.

Cliff replies that he knows, and she quickly abuses him, asking him what he’s going to do about it. When he asks how she found out, she avoids the question, redirecting the conversation to how Cliff plans on dealing with this situation. He explains that he doesn’t see Nick being dumb enough to go to the police, especially considering the fact that he robbed them first. He establishes that the kid is the only one he needs to worry about, and that if he
happens to tell his father or a teacher what he saw things could quickly spin out of control.

Hannah begins to break down and expresses her concern that Nick will do something to hurt her to retaliate at Cliff. He asks whether that’s something she thinks Nick is capable of, as she tears up telling her that she doesn’t know, but she is terrified with this obsession Nick seems to have with her. Cliff reassures her that if Nick tries anything, he will personally make sure it never happens again. She ponders out loud how she was so lucky to land someone like Cliff, and the two passionately make out, Hannah falling back onto the pool table as Cliff pulls his shirt off.

2 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

We see Cliff dressing himself nicely, putting on a collared shirt and dress pants and tidying his hair with a basin full of water. He places his laptop on the basin in front of him, and starts following the instructions in a video guide for tying a tie, fumbling and rewinding the video several times in the process. He finally achieves the look he’s striving for as Hannah walks into the bathroom behind him, wearing one of his baggy t-shirts down to her thighs. She wraps her arms around his waist and kisses his neck, wishing him good luck. He grabs her hands and squeezes them gently, thanking her. As she walks out the bathroom, he gives her a quick and gentle squeeze of the buttocks, asking her if she wants a ride to school. She replies that her and her friends are missing the first few periods, and then he walks out the back door.

We watch as Cliff explains to employer after employer how he is willing to do almost any work, as employer after employer tries to politely inform Cliff that they’re not hiring and that they’ll keep his records on file for any future positions that open up. Cliff struggles to maintain composure and keep his cool at each of them, finally losing his cool when the last of them explains that Cliff’s former boss is a good friend of his and there’s no way there will ever be a position for him at their company after hearing of the fallout from their split. Cliff angrily shoots to his feet, launching a torrent of abuse at the man, curses
and insults flying out of his mouth willy-nilly. Cliff bids a very insincere good day to the man, and briskly walks out of his office.

Cliff sits out on the roadside in his van with his head between his hands, breathing heavily through his fingers. He suddenly sits back and screams at the top of his lungs, blasting his hand down on the horn as he does so. A woman walking down the road looks at him strangely as he calms down, and he blasts back at her with a stern middle finger. He sits and collects his thoughts for a second, then pulls out his phone and selects a contact. When the person on the other end answers, Cliff says they need to talk.

Cliff walks into an office suite, and Brad rises to greet him; Cliff’s younger and far more successful brother. Brad introduces Cliff to his co-workers around the table; a group of well dressed and well groomed young men. Cliff doesn’t waste any time and jumps to the point, asking Brad if there’s any jobs going. Brad explains that he’s not in charge of the company and can’t just create jobs, but even if he was there’s not much someone like Cliff can do without any formal qualifications at a web development company. This amuses some of Brad’s co-workers, who snigger to themselves as Cliff tries to ignore them while he converses with his brother.

Cliff explains that he’s desperate and willing to do anything, including being the janitor if required. Brad once again explains that he’s not in the position to hire, but he can put the word forward to his superiors. When Cliff tries to press the issue, one of Brad’s co-workers makes a joke about how out of place Cliff appears in a suit, and before Brad has a chance to stop him Cliff steps forward, pulls the guy out of his chair and punches him in the face.

Cliff sits on the front porch in the night with a beer in hand as a car pulls into the driveway. The car’s headlights shut off, and Brad climbs out of the car. He walks over to Cliff, shaking his head. Cliff apologizes for his behavior, and Brad laughs it off, saying that the guy was a bit of an asshole anyway. Brad asks how desperate Cliff is for money, and offers Cliff a room at the house he shares with his girlfriend, and Cliff responds he’s not quite that
desperate. Brad reassures Cliff that there’s no shame in accepting help from his younger brother, and leaves the offer open for the future if he needs it.

3 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

Cliff punches in a number on his cellphone, and politely asks the person on the other end if he can get a message through to his nephew Tom Davis in class, and the person replies that they don’t have a Tom Davis at their school. He apologizes and ticks off a primary school off his list, repeating the process with several of them until he reaches one that acknowledges they have a Tom Davis. When they ask what the message is, Cliff quickly dismisses the matter, claiming it’s not actually important and hanging up the phone.

The school bell rings at a local primary school, and a screaming group of kids run out the front gate to greet their parents or wait for their buses. Tom Davis walks out and paces the footpath beside his bus stop, kicking a stone around. Cliff watches from the driver’s seat of his van on the opposite side of the road, window fully down as he slowly studies the boys actions. Tom glances up and catches Cliff’s gaze, who quickly looks away. Cliff glances back for half a second, long enough to see Tom quickly walking over to his side of the road. Cliff quickly turns the keys in the ignition, fires the van into gear and tears off down the road, as Tom waits in its wake, watching the van tear off down the road.

Cliff sits in his van at a car park that overlooks the entire town. He climbs out of the van and walks over to sit on the park bench nearby. As he walks he notices a car parked nearby with a couple of teenagers in the front seats making out. He sits down on the bench and digs his elbows into his knees, resting his head in his hands. He breathes in and out heavily and slowly, massaging his temples as he does so. His phone vibrates, and he pulls it out do see a text from Eddie, telling him that they need to talk and to meet at home in a couple of hours.
Cliff walks in the front door and heads straight for the kitchen. He grabs a beer from the fridge and opens it, drinking half the bottle in one go, then rests against the kitchen counter as he ponders the best course of action. He hears a noise from the lounge and walks in to find Ryan surrounded by empty beer bottles, extremely intoxicated and watching television.

Ryan tells Cliff to come with him; Ryan needs to let off some steam, and the perfect way to manage that is to find an unsecure house to break into. Cliff shakes his head in disagreement, telling Ryan that there’s no way he’s going to go rob somebody’s place when Ryan is in a state like that.

Ryan doesn’t take the rejection kindly, beginning to tease Cliff about being afraid, and calling him out on the fact that Cliff is the one who needs the money. Cliff appears to be building a temper, but puts great effort into keeping his cool with Ryan, telling him tonight is not the right time, and that maybe he should go sleep it off. Ryan angrily walks out the front door, grabbing his hoody on the way out.

Cliff settles down into the couch and rests back with his beer in between his legs, slowly shutting his eyes. As he looks like he begins to find some comfort, he hears a knock at the door.

He stands up and wanders to the door. He opens it up and is shocked to find Nick standing behind it. Without hesitation, Cliff lunges out the door and smacks him in the face, knocking Nick to the ground. As Cliff moves in to follow up, Nick scrambles back and rushes to his feet, throwing his hands up, pleading with Cliff that they really need to talk about Cliff’s psycho girlfriend.
Episode: Nick Davis
4 MONTHS BEFORE THE HEIST

Nick Davis sits with his friends at a party; each of them enjoying a couple of beers as they discuss the girls at the party they think is the most attractive. Nick is suspiciously quiet, opting instead to just smile and laugh at his friends banter rather than actively participate. He feels his pocket vibrate and checks his phone to find a message from Hannah Larson, an affectionate message telling him that she’ll be arriving at the party soon.

Nick quickly taps out a reply on his phone then pockets it. He finishes his beer and heads to the kitchen, finding his box of beers on the counter and grabbing himself a fresh one. He turns around to head back into the main room to join his friends again, and sees Lacey Gabriel; a girl from his school, sliding into the kitchen and looking at Nick suggestively. Nick politely addresses her and tries to step around her to head back into the party. She cuts him off and gently nudges him back towards the kitchen bench, talking softly to try and seduce him. Nick laughs it off and tries to explain nothing is going to happen, suggesting that she’s too drunk and maybe should go find her friends. As he tries to protest, she leans in and kisses him, just as Hannah rounds the corner into the kitchen to see them.

Nick sees this out of the corner of his eye as he tries to push Lacey off, chasing Hannah out of the kitchen as she yells something at him. Hannah storms outside, with Nick following her pleading a chance to explain what’s happened. As he reaches the bottom of the doorstep, Hannah turns around and slaps Nick across his face.

TITLE SEQUENCE

PRESENT DAY

Nick sits in the school canteen with his friends; looking up and seeing Hannah enter the room. He tries to give her a smile, but she shoots him a dirty look back. Nick sighs and his friend Mike chimes in to ask how things are with Hannah. Nick explains to him that he’s tried time and time again to explain what happened that night, that Hannah herself has a new boyfriend.
and has moved on, so he doesn’t understand why she’s still so hostile towards him. Mike asks who the new boyfriend is and Nick tells him it’s some electrician in his mid 20s. Mike confesses that he always got a crazy vibe from Hannah when Nick was still with her, and that maybe it’s for the best that they’re apart. He then suggests that the two of them go to a party tonight to get his mind off things. As they leave the canteen Nick spots Lacey again, who shoots him a warm smile.

Later at the party, Nick is on the couch chatting to Lacey, who is less drunk than their last encounter. The two hit it off, chatting and flirting up a storm, and when her friends tell Lacey that they’re leaving, she leans in and grants Nick a large kiss goodbye, writing her number in on his phone and stating that she hopes to see him around. Mike moves in and congratulates Nick on moving on, personally expressing his jealousy that a catch like Lacey Gabriel is even interested in him, before getting summoned to a bedroom by another female at the party. Nick laughs as Mike demonstrates false reluctance as he gets dragged away by the hand.

The next day Nick and Lacey are sitting at a café together, enjoying a milkshake and laughing over conversation together. Lacey ducks out of the room to go to the bathroom; her seat immediately occupied by a furious looking Hannah as soon as the door is closed. Nick gets a fright from her sudden appearance, and then asks her why she’s following him. Hannah lets off a torrent of abuse towards him, asking him why after everything that “whore” put them through he’s spending time with her. Nick calmly and rationally explains to Hannah that she’s made it clear to him she wants nothing to do with him, and questions why she even cares when she’s moved on with her new boyfriend. Hannah storms out, telling Nick he’s an asshole, falsely wishing him a happy life with Lacey as she leaves. Lacey returns from the bathroom and asks what’s wrong when she sees Nick rubbing his temples. He smiles at her and replies that everything is perfect, and when she offers to go back to her place he quickly accepts.
Nick and Lacey lie in her bed, her head gently nuzzled into the crook of his armpit. He has his arm around her, gently caressing her bare shoulders. They share a moment of pillow talk, before Nick looks at the clock and realizes it’s almost 10pm. He rushes out of bed and puts his pants on, explaining that he was supposed to be picking his little brother up from a friend’s place a couple of hours ago. He kisses Lacey goodbye then runs out to his car.

Nick’s black Honda Civic pulls up in a driveway, and we see his eight year old brother Tom get guided over by his friend’s mother, who scolds Nick for being late. Tom climbs into the passenger seat and waves goodbye to his friend on the doorstep, and Nick pulls out of the driveway.

As they drive home, Nick makes a valiant attempt at conversation with Tom, who is very reserved and quiet. After several unsuccessful attempts to draw a conversation from him, Nick decides to sit quiet, driving home in uncomfortable silence. When they pull into the driveway, Tom slowly wanders inside, dropping his backpack at the door and walking into his bedroom. Nick says good night to him, and gets no response. He sighs and locks the door behind him. He walks into his bedroom and clicks on the light.

Nick is taken aback when he sees a large pile of property sitting against the wall, televisions, laptops, gaming consoles, and a large other assortment of bags filled with clothing and various goods. Nick looks through all of the gear, noting a bag labeled “Ryan”, before pacing out to the front door and scanning the surrounding street.

THE DAY OF THE HEIST

Sitting in class a couple of days after, appearing very distant and clearly musing over his finding, Nick sees Hannah walk in with a couple of her friends and sit down on the opposite side of the classroom. He glances over but quickly looks away when she shoots him a glare. He sits in deep thought, when something Hannah says catches his attention. He listens as Hannah explains to her friends that her boyfriend Cliff’s house just got robbed, and lists the sort of items that got stolen from their house. Nick looks over, his face
twisting as he connects dots in his head, staring at Hannah’s face as she tells her friends about the robbery, with an expression that doesn’t scream worry at the situation, but a smug satisfaction.

As class finishes, Nick approaches Hannah and singles her out from her friends, telling her that they need to talk. He apologizes for everything and explains that he just needs to have a proper talk with her, asking her out for a drink that night. She denies him, saying she’s busy that night, but when he presses the issue she agrees to meet him the following night.

Nick pulls in the car park opposite a bar in town, and hops out and crosses the street. He walks into the bar, spotting Hannah sitting at a table on the opposite side. He strides across and sits down opposite her. One of the bar staff approaches and asks to see their IDs, Nick hands over his legitimate license while Hannah passes over a license that vaguely resembles her reading “Kelly Peters”. The staff member looks it over for a second, and then hands it back to her with a smirk. Nick makes a small comment on the fact that Hannah still uses that ID. She turns to him and asks what this is about.

Nick wastes no time in jumping to the point, immediately asking Hannah whether she had anything to do with the stolen property appearing in his house. She responds by playing dumb, acting as if she has no idea what he’s talking about, laughing when he suggests that she’d steal her boyfriends stuff just to frame Nick. She turns the tables on him, suggesting that if he’s in possession of all this property that her boyfriend recently had lost, maybe it’s her responsibility to tell the authorities this. She stands up to leave, making it out the door before Nick follows her, asking her what the end game is. She turns around, her face bearing the smug expression again, informing him she hasn’t decided yet, but this isn’t over. Nick stands there in shock, struggling to process what has just happened, before returning to the bar and ordering a beer and a shot of Jagermeister.

Nick emerges from the pub a small while later, walking over to his car. He tries to reverse out of the car park and discovers he has a flat tire. When he reaches into his boot to grab his tools, a man walks over and offers to help, introducing himself as Eddie. Nick introduces himself, and Eddie brings over
his trolley jack, explaining it'll be a much easier job. After Eddie has finished helping him, Nick thanks him and drives out of the car park, returning home.

Nick walks in the front door and immediately notices a photo frame on the floor. He picks it up and returns it to its perch, then looks into the lounge and sees the carnage. Empty drawers scattered everywhere and shelves cleared clean off. Among the carnage, his drunk father asleep on the couch. He walks into his room and looks to where the pile of goods was, noticing that they’re all missing. With a sudden realization, he runs to his brother’s room, barreling through the door and turning on the light. Tom sits up, blinking at the harshness of the light, and Nick hugs him tightly, asking him if he’s okay. Tom explains that he’s fine, but he saw a man. Nick freezes, and then pulls up his phone, bringing up a photo of Cliff. He shows it to Tom, who nods, telling him that was the guy he saw.

THE DAY AFTER THE HEIST

The next morning, Nick wakes up, and shuffles his way through the carnage on his way to the kitchen. His father is still passed out on the couch, and doesn’t budge the entire time Nick sits in the seat next to him eating his breakfast. Nick walks out the door and heads to school.

Nick storms up to Hannah in the common room and yells at her, leading to a couple of her friends pushing him, telling him to back off. He angrily growls that she may have had a problem with him, but now she’s put his brother in danger, and that it’s time for this to come to a stop. She doesn’t respond, appearing quite shocked at the news that his brother is in danger because of it. When a couple of boys approach to try restrain Nick, he storms out of the room.

Nick walks in the front door at home, and sees his father sitting in the living room. He is sitting over an empty jewelry box, shaking slightly. Nick asks if it’s his mothers jewelry box, and his father nods yes, nostrils flaring as he tries to restrain his anger. Nick says he’s sorry, and his father angrily looks
up, asking what for. Nick replies that he didn’t want any of this, and his father stands up and shoves him into the wall. Nick stares into his father’s eyes in fear, who coils his hand in Nicks shirt and pins him against the wall, screaming that the jewelry box was one of the last things of his wife that he owned, with Nick apologizing over and over again. His father lets him go and Nick scrambles over to the other side of the room, leaning against the table for support. He asks his father what he can do to make things right. His father yells that it’s his responsibility to get this stuff back.

2 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

The sun rises, and Nick lies in bed, facing away from the door. His father comes in and grumbles that he should probably leave for school, and Nick mumbles that he’s not going. The day passes, as Nick transitions from lying on his bed, to the couch, to the lawn outside, to back on the bed as night falls.

3 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

The next day comes around and he does the same, finding different spots around the house to mope for the duration of the day. In the early afternoon, he hears the front door open as Tom comes home. Tom comes in and sits on the chair beside Nick, lying on the couch in the lounge. The two exchange half-hearted greetings. As they sit in silence for a moment, Tom pipes up that he saw the man waiting outside school today. Barely listening, Nick mumbles what man is Tom talking about. Tom replies that he’s talking about the man in the picture, the one who he saw in his room. Nick’s face lights up, and he turns to Tom, asking him to repeat what he just said.

Nick walks up the pathway to the front door of Cliff’s house, angrily banging on the front door. As he waits, he paces around the doorstep, working himself up for a confrontation as his face burns with rage. Cliff opens the door, his face dropping straight away when he realizes its Nick. Before Nick even gets an opportunity to say a couple of words, Cliff strikes Nick across the face with a right hook, knocking him to the ground instantly.
Episode: Eddie Terry
3 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

A man grunts loudly, leaning in close to the girl he lays naked on top of and passionately kisses her. She returns the kiss, small moans escaping the corners of her mouth as she does so. He leans out from the kiss and plants his hand on the wall behind her head, staring her deep in the eyes as he draws slow, rhythmic breaths. He is a well-groomed man who looks to be in his mid 30s, while the girl under him is a petite but striking blonde, who appears to only just be pushing drinking age. Around the room is a wide variety of neatly arranged décor; candles, paintings, potpourri and photo frames, the very clear arrangement of a woman’s touch.

In a photo on the bedside table, the man smiles warmly next to an attractive; if slightly older woman, both of them dressed appropriately for their wedding day. As the man continues his drumbeat thrusts, this particular photo catches his eye. He stares at it momentarily, the girl below him noticing almost immediately that his attention lies elsewhere. His thrusting slows to a halt. Mildly irritated, the girl stretches over and places the photo frame face down. She leans up and kisses him, whispering that she’s here now. He smiles at her and kisses her back, apologizing briefly before resuming his pelvic routine.

As the thrusting gets faster and the moans get louder, we slowly draw back to see the scene play out on the screen of a cellphone, a small red light on the screen indicating it’s recording.

TITLE SEQUENCE

THE NIGHT OF THE HEIST

The man knocks on Eddie’s car window, the same man who we’ve just seen having sex. Eddie rolls the window down and asks the man what’s going on, who angrily asks why Eddie just let that boys tire down.

Eddie blows raspberries through his lips loudly as he searches for an excuse, eventually trying to dismiss the man with an “It’s a long story” charade. The man tells him to get out of the car, and Eddie laughs in
response, before the man threatens to call the police and show them the video he’s recorded of Eddie letting the tire down. Suddenly taking the man more seriously, Eddie climbs out of the car, finding himself extremely up close and personal with the man. Eddie asks what’s stopping him from smashing the man’s phone and driving off, and the man replies that with “modern technology” that video was backed up on the cloud the instant it was taken.

Eddie reasons with the man, establishing that if he were truly going to call the cops he would’ve by now, concluding that there must be something he wants. The man states that his desires are simple; money will do the trick. Eddie pulls out his wallet and draws two $50 notes from it, asking if that’s enough to buy the man’s silence. The man laughs with a smug grin stretched across his face, leering that perhaps they better go to an ATM.

As they walk to the ATM, Eddie warns the man that he’s messing with the wrong guy. He is quickly told to keep quiet. Eddie withdraws $500 cash and hands it to the man, who counts out the individual notes with a satisfied smirk on his face. Once he places the notes in his pocket, he lashes out and punches Eddie in the stomach, dropping him to his knees in pain. He leans in close and whispers to Eddie that if he even thinks about doing anything, that video will go straight to the police and he’ll have some serious explaining to do. He watches helplessly as the man walks back to his car, an expensive looking Audi, and drive off.

Eddie arrives home to find a very excited Ryan; and a noticeably less excited Cliff, evaluating their haul from the robbery. He unenthusiastically asks what the plan is from here, Ryan declares its time they go see Travis.

THE DAY AFTER THE HEIST

Travis looks over the items he’s been shown, over and over again, pondering to himself, and scrawling on a small bit of paper. Eddie sits by his side, watching his thinking process, while Cliff stands by the door, drumming his feet on the ground impatiently, and Ryan sits in the lounge making awkward small talk with Megan.
Travis announces he’s willing to give them $1500 all up, $500 each to the three of them. Before Cliff gets a chance to accept the offer, Ryan pipes up that it’s not enough, demanding more. As Travis quickly moves to shut Ryan down, Eddie steps in and drags Travis out the back of the house to talk in private.

Eddie pleads with Travis to go higher, just to keep Ryan happy, and Travis resolves that he’ll raise his price to $2000, but no higher. Eddie returns inside to tell Ryan this, who reacts poorly, shooting outside to confront Travis himself.

Eddie pulls Cliff away from the nosy ears of Megan, explaining that there’s no way that Travis is going to budge on that $2000 offer, and that perhaps they should give Ryan $1000 to make him think Travis went higher, as Eddie and Cliff were both happy with $500 anyway. As Cliff considers this option, Eddie jokes that it’s not like Cliff needs the money anyway, blissfully unaware of his employment situation. Cliff grunts a fake laugh back, and then watches as Ryan angrily storms through the house and out the front door. Eddie sighs deeply, and Cliff follows Ryan out to offer him a ride home. Travis returns inside, taking long breaths to calm himself. Eddie apologizes, and Travis tells him that Ryan is messing with a lifestyle he has no business being a part of. Eddie defends Ryan, but Travis quickly shuts him down, stating that Ryan had far too nice of an upbringing to know what’s going on with the criminal element.

Eddie arrives home, and counts out $1000 cash, placing it on Ryan’s bedside table.

2 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

Eddie wakes up to a loud series of knocks on the door. He peels back the curtain, squinting into the sunlight outside, before finally noticing a police car in the driveway. He mutters a curse word under his breath, then throws on a t-shirt and wanders out into the hallway towards the front door.

He opens the door, and the cop introduces himself as Sergeant Gavin Kelly. The officer asks about their recent burglary, and apologizes for the lack
of police activity chasing up on the issue. He asks if there have been any developments, and Eddie begins laughing, explaining that some of their friends had a twisted idea of a joke and hid a bunch of their stuff, that they weren’t robbed at all. Gavin looks suspicious for a moment, pressuring Eddie for the truth. Eddie apologizes for wasting his time, dismissing the notion that there’s a burglary to investigate. Gavin wishes him a good day, then walks down the driveway and hops into his car.

As Eddie walks back to his room, Ryan pops his head out of the door and asks who it was. Eddie explains that it was a cop and that he’s dealt with the situation.

Eddie pulls into a workshop in his car, then hops out and goes inside to put his lunch away on a shelf. He hears a car arrive, and looks up out the window to see an Audi approach the workshop. A man climbs out, and Eddie’s eyes light up as he realizes it’s the man who blackmailed him. He bows his head slightly so his face is hidden, watching as the man explains to Eddie’s colleague that he’s just bringing his car in for a warrant of fitness. The man walks off, and Eddie shoots out of the room to question his workmate who that man was. His colleague ponders for a moment, before reading the form in front of him as Eric Slater.

Later, Eddie walks into the office when nobody is looking, quickly searching through the mound of paperwork until he finds Eric’s form, searching for his address and quickly scribbling it down on a piece of paper.

Eddie sits on the couch watching television, in a daze as his fingers curl around the piece of paper with Eric’s address on it. Ryan walks in and offers Eddie a beer, snapping him out of his daze.

Ryan asks him what’s going on, and Eddie replies it’s nothing to worry about. Ryan apologizes for pressuring Travis the day before, but explains that he just believes they weren’t getting what they were owed. Eddie shrugs it off, smiling as he tells Ryan it doesn’t matter, they got the money and that was the end of things.

Ryan leans in close to Eddie and asks him if there’s any chance Eddie would want to rob another house. Eddie laughs him off, until he realizes
Ryan’s face is dead serious, at which point he tells Ryan he’s being an idiot. Ryan explains that this is their opportunity to make a bit of extra cash and get some cheap thrills by doing so. Eddie continues to scold Ryan for even suggesting the idea, until Ryan mentions the idea that they can piss off people who’ve wronged them in the past. Eddie momentarily considers this notion, then tells Ryan they’ll talk later and walks out.

Eddie pulls up in front of Eric’s house, driving his work truck to avoid recognition. He admires the grandeur of the house, clearly a very expensive property. He sees a second car pull up into the driveway, and watches through the lounge window as a slightly younger woman walks in and kisses Eric warmly as a greeting. Eddie’s eyes narrow as he begins to mentally concoct his revenge.

3 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

The following day at work, Eddie sits and ponders to himself, visualizing the house he’d surveyed the night before. He barely responds as his workmates try to attract his attention, his focus somewhere else entirely.

Eddie pulls his truck up in front of Eric’s house again, noticing the empty driveway this time. He looks up and down the street, noticing the quietness the entire neighborhood seems to have. He climbs out of his car and crosses the street, entering Eric’s yard. He wanders around the back of the house, where he notices a window slightly ajar high up above a planter box. He climbs onto the box and drags himself up and through the window and into the house.

Inside, he slowly creeps down the hallway and into the lounge, immediately taking notice of the wall of diplomas and degrees, all for a “Maggie Cameron”. He notices a few wedding photos of Maggie and Eric, which highlight the age gap between the two. Eric appearing to be in his mid 30s while Maggie is in her early 50s. As he picks up one of the photos to examine it closer, he hears a car slow to a stop in the driveway, and ducks behind one of the bedroom doors as he hears voices approach the front door.
Eddie listens as he hears Eric enter, along with a young and bubbly female voice talking with him. The conversation sounds flirty, and Eddie cranes his neck against the wall to get a better listening angle. The two walk down past Eddie’s hiding place and into the master bedroom. Eddie crouches and sits silent, listening for more conversation. Before too long, he starts to hear the moans of sex, and he perks up as he begins to realize what’s happening.

Slowly but purposefully, he creeps out into the hallway and maneuvers his way down to the master bedroom door, drawing his phone out as he does so. The grunts and moans get louder as he approaches. He finally reaches the bedroom door and holds up his phone to start recording, snapping some grainy but damning footage of Eric’s adultery.

When Eric walks out into the kitchen to grab a drink, Eddie clicks on a light to reveal himself sitting on the couch in the living room. Eric takes a second to process that Eddie is sitting before him, and then strides towards him angrily, ready to interrogate him as to why he’s here. Before he has the chance to take a couple of steps, Eddie thrusts his phone out in front of him, calmly explaining that unless Eric wants his wife finding out about his younger lover he better do exactly as he says. “Before you went dragging skeletons out of my closet, you should have checked your own”. Eric takes a seat, and Eddie paces before him, taunting him about the benefits of “modern technology” at backing up his videos to the cloud. Eddie expresses his curiosity as to who the female in the bedroom actually is. He walks in and takes a photo, the girl frantically covering her breasts with the blankets when Eddie walks in. He laughs as he comes out, teasing Eric that he’s gone from marrying someone twice his age to screwing someone half his age.

As Eric sits in silence, Eddie continues pacing the room, taunting him about the kind of man he must be to marry an older successful woman, live completely and happily off her money whilst keeping a younger girl on the side. Eric asks what he wants, and Eddie claims he wants his $500 back; noting that he doesn’t understand why a man who had access to that kind of money needed $500, along with the expensive watch on Eric’s wrist. Eric obliges, handing him the cash and the watch, and Eddie then demands that
Eric delete his video off his phone and the cloud, promising he’ll do the same afterwards. He does so, and Eric thanks him, before delivering a sharp punch to Eric’s stomach. As Eric keels over from the hit, Eddie follows up with a punch to the face, knocking Eric to the ground.

Eric looks up to see Eddie crouching over him, showing that he’s also deleted his incriminating footage. Eddie stands up to walk out as Eric’s phone starts ringing on the table beside them. Eddie picks it up and places it beside Eric on the ground, telling him he should probably answer that, his wife might not be too happy. Eric looks up with a look of defeat, asking why Eddie sent her the footage when he did everything he was asked. Eddie leans down condescendingly, explaining he gave fair warning that he was messing with the wrong person. He walks out the front door, lighting up a cigarette on the porch.

The young girl walks out crying, and Eddie apologizes to her, saying it had nothing to do with her and he just wanted to see a bad man punished. She accepts his apology, and he introduces himself. She introduces herself as Cara, and accepts his offer of giving her a ride home to make up for the embarrassment.

We hear the same rhythmic thrusts as before, with the same moan from the same girl. Only this time, Eddie is on top of her, staring deep into her eyes as a wild smile forms on his face.
Episode: Stacey Kelly
THE NIGHT OF THE HEIST

Stacey knocks on the door in front of her, then waits patiently. She hears the rush of footsteps approaching then the door explodes open in front of her, her mother; Teresa, excitedly greeting her and pulling her in for an immediate hug and kiss. Stacey returns the enthusiasm, and Teresa inquires where Ryan is, a look of slight concern on her face. Stacey explains that Ryan is going to meet them here later, and Teresa's face returns to sheer delight.

Stacey walks into the lounge and her father Gavin stands up to meet her, his moustache scratching the side of her face as he squeezes her tight. She manages to pull away and go hug her younger sister June, who is just as excited to see her as the rest of the family.

Stacey offers her assistance in the kitchen, and Teresa is quick to shut her down, asking her to call Ryan and check how far away he is going to be. Stacey walks outside and dials his number. She waits patiently as Ryan picks up the phone. He tells her he’s out with the guys, and that they’re meeting friends she doesn’t know, (the conversation from the pilot). She gets agitated when he starts to voice aggression, then looks inside at her family setting the table, all showing an unhealthy amount of enthusiasm about dinner, then tells Ryan to have a good night. She stands outside for a while longer, staring at her phone, before making her way inside.

TITLE SEQUENCE

Stacey closes the door behind her, and her mother asks her what’s the deal with Ryan. Stacey lies and tells her something came up at work and he has to work through the night, her lie met with a chorus of “darn it” colloquialisms.

The family sits down for dinner, sharing conversation about their activities during the day, with all but Stacey maintaining the surreal level of enthusiasm towards the conversation. Stacey mentions to her father that Ryan’s house got robbed and the police aren’t doing anything about it, and wonders if he can pull any strings. Gavin replies that he’ll do even better, and personally go around to their house to investigate further himself.
THE DAY AFTER THE HEIST

Stacey walks out into her kitchen in the morning, greeting her roommate Cara as she pours herself a bowl of cereal. Stacey asks what time Cara got in last night, who responds that she was with a friend and was out pretty late. Stacey quizzes Cara whether this friend happens to be the married man she’s been rendezvousing with, her question met with a cheeky smile and a biting of the bottom lip, followed by a drawn out “maybe”. Stacey playfully scolds her, suggesting that she’s going to land herself in trouble if she goes and destroys a marriage. Cara admits she knows it’s a reckless and selfish thing to do, but the wedding ring on the finger merely adds to the thrill for her. Stacey shakes her head in disbelief, then goes to prepare herself for work. As she walks out to her car, she receives a call from Ryan asking her to dinner that night, she accepts, telling him to pick her up at 7.

Dressed in a sharp looking blazer and skirt, Stacey guides a young couple through an expensive looking house, explaining the benefits of the open living plan and how much they’re looking at per week for rent. The couple express their gratitude, then leave the house and drive off. Stacey walks out and locks the door behind her, climbing into her car and driving off.

Driving away, she pulls up at an intersection and casually checks her phone. She hears the laughter of young girls, and looks out her window to spot a group of schoolgirls standing around smoking. Stacey shakes her head for a moment, before recognizing one of them as June. She spins the car around and pulls up beside them, walking across to them straight away.

June notices her coming and curses, throwing her cigarette on the ground and stomping it. Stacey storms over to her, grabbing her by the arm and telling her to get in the car. She pauses when she hears one of the other girls call her name, looking over to realize it’s Hannah, Cliff’s girlfriend. Stacey mumbles a brief greeting to her, then steers June towards the car.

As the two drive away, Stacey asks her what was going through her head walking out of school to go smoke, and asks why she shouldn’t tell their parents. June challenges her to, suggesting maybe it’s time their parents realize they’re not the fairytale family they think they are. Stacey eases off and
tries to convince her that she’s making bad decisions, and that she’s not comfortable with June spending time with Hannah Larson.

When June inquires how she knows her, Stacey explains that it’s Cliff’s girlfriend, and that she gets bad vibes from her. June claims she’s not that bad, met with a disapproving grunt from Stacey.

Stacey pulls up out front of the school gate and warns June she better go back into class. June sighs loudly and begins to wander back in.

Ryan and Stacey sit at a restaurant table together, looking over a menu. The restaurant is quite expensive looking, and the two of them have dressed up for the occasion. Stacey goes on a rant about how irresponsible June was being, as Ryan slowly nods in agreement while barely maintaining attention.

Stacey asks if they’ve heard anything from the cops about whether they’re going to come around, Ryan tells her that the cops came through for them and managed to get their stuff back. Stacey is delighted, praising the efficiency of the police officers.

As they leave the restaurant, Ryan pulls out a couple of hundred dollar notes to pay for the meal, much to Stacey’s surprise. When she quizzes him on where all this money has come from, she’s told he’s been working a lot of overtime lately and has a bit of money to spare. Stacey doesn’t inquire any further, and is more than happy to take the meal.

2 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

As Stacey prepares her breakfast, she hears the front door open, followed by footsteps as Cara walks into the room with her heels in hand. Stacey voices her disbelief at the fact that Cara appears to be spending every night with him, dismissed by a wave of the hand and a shake of the head.

Stacey shows another couple through another house, showing a strong sense of enthusiasm for them. Satisfied with the house and smitten by the attractive and bubbly female showing them around it, the two make idle chat with her, asking her if she has a boyfriend. She warmly replies that she does, and they inquire what he’s like. She responds that he likes to think he’s this
rough and hard-done-by character, but deep down he’s an honest and caring man. They ask if she’s quite serious about him, and she responds that she’s starting to think she is.

Stacey sits down on the couch beside Cara with a bowl of ice cream, and Cara repositions herself from her lying position in front of the television to accommodate. Stacey apologizes if it’s none of her business, but asks what it is Cara sees in this married man she’s seeing. Cara says that there’s just a confidence about him that she finds super attractive, which makes up for the 12-year age gap between the two. The two share a laugh about the last fact, before Cara asks what it is Stacey sees in Ryan. Stacey replies that it’s simple, she sees Ryan as this simple, down to earth and all around good guy. Cara agrees, telling Stacey that she better make sure she holds on to him. Her response is simple and blunt; she has no intention of letting anyone get in the way of their happiness.

3 DAYS AFTER THE HEIST

Ryan and Stacey are at a bar having a drink, laughing over something and getting extra cuddly compared to usual. Ryan almost spits his drink out when he sees Megan enter the bar, giving her a half-hearted smile when she spots him almost immediately.

She runs over, hugging Ryan and kissing him on the cheek, before Stacey introduces herself as Ryan’s girlfriend. Megan walks away, and when Stacey inquires who she is, Ryan confesses that Megan hit on him at Travis’ place. Stacey laughs it off, but when she sees Megan go into the bathroom, she follows, as Ryan obliviously waits at the table.

Stacey walks into the bathroom and sees Megan washing her hands. Megan looks up in the mirror and smiles at Stacey. Stacey stares coldly back, prompting Megan to turn around and ask her if she did something to offend Stacey. Stacey retorts that she saw the way she acted around Ryan, and that maybe she needs to back off. Megan raises her hands in submissiveness, promising she’ll have nothing to do with him. Stacey asks if Megan slept with him, who is quick to assure Stacey she didn’t. Stacey laughs and apologizes,
then leans in for a hug. As Megan reluctantly accepts, Stacey leans in close and calls her a liar, before issuing a more serious threat that she better keep her distance.

Stacey returns from the bathroom and leans in to make a very public demonstration about kissing Ryan, to his surprise. Ryan flashes her a stupid grin as he asks what that was for, and she replies no particular reason. The two grab their drinks and finish them; Ryan stands up and puts his jacket around Stacey who warmly thanks him. As they walk out of the bar, Stacey looks over her shoulder at Megan with a sneer, who looks back with a sullen expression on her face.

As the two of them climb into Ryan’s car, he asks Stacey whether she said anything to Megan. As they drive, Stacey claims that Megan told her she doesn’t deserve Ryan, and that Megan has him in her sights. Ryan shakes his head in disbelief. As they pull into Stacey’s driveway, she asks Ryan if he had sex with Megan. Ryan is quick to defend himself, stating he wouldn’t. The two argue, and Stacey walks out, slamming the door behind her. She walks into the house and she leans her head against the front door.

Cara notices her standing there and asks what’s wrong. Stacey asks her why she is a smart, rationally thinking adult until a boy is in the equation. Cara responds that Stacey is allowed to feel jealous sometimes. Stacey confesses that she knew she was being awful to Megan at the bar, but felt like she was an outsider looking in at herself lose control without being able to stop. She asks Cara if she wants to join her for dinner at her parents, but Cara declines, saying she’s meeting up with her married man for the evening.

Stacey arrives at her parents place, and is greeted by the same overenthusiasm from her mother at the door. She inquires where Ryan is, and Stacey quickly dismisses her, saying he’s at work again.

As the family sits around the dinner table, Stacey attempts to thank her father for chasing up on the robbery. Before she gets a chance, Gavin tells her that it was all a big misunderstanding according to one of the boys, that they got their stuff back on their own. Realizing this contradicts what Ryan told her, she forces a smile back and thanks her father for checking anyway.
When their parents step out, June leans in close to Stacey and says she noticed Stacey’s reaction to their father’s news, and wants to know what she’s not letting on. Stacey tries to shut her up, but June presses the issue, insinuating that perhaps Ryan isn’t the good boy she claims he is, calling Stacey out on her hypocrisy for hanging with such a delinquent. Stacey hisses back at her to stay out of it, that she’s the one keeping the peace in the family and it needs to stay that way. She also warns June that if she ever threatens Ryan, their sisterhood won’t count for much. With a smug look, June declares that the fairytale can’t last forever.

Stacey arrives home again, calling Ryan and informing his voicemail it’s the fourth time she’s called and she needs to speak to him. She paces around the living room frantically, trying to connect the dots in your head. She starts to walk to her bedroom and comes across Eddie slipping out from Cara’s bedroom.

The two lock eyes and share a moment of confusion as they wonder why the other is there. Eventually Stacey blurts out asking Eddie if he slept with Cara, he replies that he did and he had no idea they were roommates. Stacey expresses her disgust for a moment before putting that aside, asking Eddie how they got their property back. Eddie feeds her the same lie Ryan did, that the cops did their job, and she quickly snaps back that she knows that’s a lie. As Eddie flusters at an explanation, Stacey jumps to the point and asks him if they went and stole their property back.
Survey Introduction

“Kleptoes” is a story of small town New Zealand bogans, doing anything they can to provide excitement in their otherwise plain existence. When their house is robbed and the police refuse to take action, three men take it upon themselves to figure out who the culprit is and recover their property, sparking a passion of burglary in the process.

The concept of Kleptoes’ story is simple, but this show aims to be different in how the story is told. After the initial pilot episode which introduces the audience to the world and the characters, the plot splits into five divided storylines for each episode that play out across the same space of time, showing how each of the five main characters have been dealing with the fallout from the initial robbery.

These individual character episodes are designed to be able to be viewed in any order, as audience feedback after each episode is aired will determine which character gets the spotlight next. For that reason, everyone surveyed will be given a different order to read the episode outlines in, to establish whether the story truly makes sense no matter the order they are exposed to it in.
Respondent 1

What are some of your favorite television shows?

Breaking Bad, 24, How I Met Your Mother, Brooklyn Nine-Nine.

Who is your favorite television character?

Walter White.
Pilot - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliff</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eddie</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacey</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

- Is the kid going to pipe up to his father or Nick about seeing Cliff?
- Is Eddie going to get reported for letting down Nick's tire?
- Is Cliff going to get addicted to burglary and try and get the others in on it?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

Why Cliff and Ryan were waiting to break into a house.

Other comments:

N/A.
Eddie- END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

- Ryan: 2
- Cliff: 3
- Eddie: 1
- Stacey: 5
- Nick: 4

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

Is Ryan going to be the one to start robberies? Also is Eddie going to be keen on the idea? Is Cliff going to get snapped?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

If the boys were going to keep breaking into places.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

On the bottom of the pile, having won a feud like the one in the episode, he'll get gung ho and not know when to quit, ending up in serious trouble.

Other comments:
Ryan - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

Ryan: 1
Cliff: 3
Eddie: 2
Stacey: 5
Nick: 4

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

When are Ryan and Cliff going to rob a house? Are they going to get themselves in hot water with Travis?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

Whether Ryan had changed after the robbery. Ladies seem to dig Ryan.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

Single and greedy, probably getting beaten up by Travis.

Other comments:
Stacey - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

- Ryan: 3
- Cliff: 4
- Eddie: 2
- Stacey: 1
- Nick: 5

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

Is Stacey going to tell her Dad?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

That the officer was in fact Stacey's dad.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

Broken up with Ryan.

Other comments:
Nick - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

Ryan: 3
Cliff: 2
Eddie: 4
Stacey: 5
Nick: 1

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

- How is Nick going to handle the confrontation?
- Is Cliff going to try and threaten Nick?
- Will Nick and the others realize each other’s faults and team up to figure out the real culprit of this ordeal?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

- Why Nick was with Hannah.
- Why the stolen goods were at Nick’s house.
- How Nick would react to his brother being around during his house being robbed.
- Whether Nick’s brother would identify Cliff as the robber.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

He is going to end up teaming up with the others to find the real culprit so he can get the stuff back that Cliff and Ryan stole.

Other comments:
Cliff - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Having read all the individual character episodes, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

Ryan: 4
Cliff: 1
Eddie: 3
Stacey: 5
Nick: 2

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading in the finale?

- Are Cliff and Nick going to build a friendship?
- Is Cliff going to end things with Hannah?
- Are Cliff and Ryan kind of switching places?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

- If Cliff was going to attempt at finding work.
- Cliff struggles to keep his cool often.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

Teaming up with Nick plotting against his girlfriend.

What do you predict the outcome of the finale to be?

I predict that Ryan is going to get caught for theft, and then nark on his mates that they took matters into their own hands after they were robbed. It will then pull the others to be questioned by police. I think Eddie will get into trouble getting cocky with blackmailing others. I also think that Cliff and Nick are going to threaten Hannah and get her back for having Cliff and his mates robbed to make it look like Nick. I think Stacey will leave Ryan after finding out through her Dad that he has been arrested for theft.

Were there any story inconsistencies or things that didn't make sense in your particular order?

No inconsistencies.

Other comments:

I feel the order I read the episodes in was great because it had plenty of gripping content, and every episode had me itching to find out what happens.
Respondent 2

What are some of your favorite television shows?

Sons of Anarchy, Desperate Housewives, How I Met Your Mother, Modern Family, Dexter, Brooklyn Nine-Nine, 24, Orphan Black.

Who is your favorite television character?

That’s a really hard question. I always love any well developed character and the more I know about them the more I love them. All of them. Even the ones I hate because it means they did a really good job at making me hate them. But least fave from these shows is Dexter’s sister Deborah Morgan because she was awkward in her role sometimes.
Pilot - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

Ryan: 2  
Cliff: 4  
Eddie: 3  
Stacey: 1  
Nick: 5

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

What were Hannah and Nick arguing about?  
Who’s the angry man that saw Eddie, and why did he wait so long to say anything if he actually cares?  
Is Travis their landlord and their friend?  
It seemed way to easy to find the culprit – what’s the catch?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

What type of people Ryan and Cliff are. Ryan and his dad have a relationship that impacts Ryan’s decisions.  
Ryan is attractive to the ladies.  
Ryan attempts to be a do-gooder but enjoyed the taste of a thrill after he didn’t get caught.  
Cliff is reckless and appears to not thoroughly think things through, or if he does he doesn’t let others in on his private, separate agenda. He doesn’t seem burdened by thoughts of consequences.
Other comments:
I hope the women are more involved in later episodes and not just as the sound-minded ones who try to reign in the craziness.
Stacey - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

- Ryan: 1
- Cliff: 4
- Eddie: 3
- Stacey: 2
- Nick: 5

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

- How will Stacey get to the bottom of the truth?
- I assume Eddie is the married man, how did that all get started?
- What's the dynamic between Cliff, Hannah, June, and Stacey?
- Where did Gavin get his information on the robbery?
- What's June's problem with the fairytale family?
- Why does Stacey bother lying to her parents about Ryan? And how long will she keep that up?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

- Ryan and Stacey seem to have a different view of their relationship status.
- Ryan is so much of a good guy that he is willing to lie to protect that image.
- Eddie is the married man.
- Stacey isn’t as much the voice of reason as in the pilot. She too will step out of character to maintain her happiness. Her and Ryan seem quite similar in that way.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

Although Stacey and Ryan are similar in the fact that they will do crazy things to maintain their good behaviour, I think they will fail to see the similarity and end up temporarily breaking it off. Each one thinking the other is nuts. Her and Ryan’s relationship dramas will come out into the open to her family, which will open another can of worms for their own issues – ruining the fairytale family perception June was saying would happen. Stacey’s job will be related to the burglary. Despite an argument with Ryan, Stacey will feel committed to helping make the burglary situation right. Stacey will but heads with Cliff (for basically praying on someone like her sister) and Eddie (for being a cheater now that she’s had suspicions about Ryan).

Other comments:

Making this the first episode after the pilot for me was a good choice and shows that you’re conscious of your audience. I was hoping for more/deeper female influence and I got it my first episode. Next hope for them is that Stacey’s and Cara’s relationship develops more based on dramas apart from who they’re dating.
Cliff - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

- Ryan: 3
- Cliff: 2
- Eddie: 1
- Stacey: 5
- Nick: 4

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

Why is Nick blaming Hannah for being the psycho one? I don't think it's because he's upset that she's told Cliff about him obsessing over her. What set Ryan off and changed his behavior? How will Cliff’s luck change with his job search? Will he have to move in with Brad? How did Brad end up so much more successful than Cliff? What was the trouble between Cliff and his boss? Why did Cliff bother finding Tom Davis if he just drove away? What was Hannah up to when she was skipping her first few periods? What will Tom do about the fact that he saw them rob his house?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

There's more to Ryan than what we saw at the start. Cliff is quite sensitive at the core and masks it with aggression. Cliff is starting to get desperate about finding a new job. Eddie seems to be the one who provides balance.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

Cliff will continue on his downward spiral through the season. Although he is starting to feel desperate, it’s not enough to change his behavior. He will go through a few more rough patches before he hits rock bottom. Cliff and Brad will bond while Cliff learns to lean on him, until Cliff screws that up. Cliff and Hannah will fall more in love with each other’s craziness and do something ridiculous in the name of love. Cliff will be caught but in less trouble than Ryan.

Other comments:

Enjoying the character development and the concisely descriptive writing. Feeling excited to know the dialogue, and obviously how it plays out.
Nick - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

Ryan: 5
Cliff: 2
Eddie: 3
Stacey: 4
Nick: 1

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

- How is Nick meant to get the stuff back now that it’s been sold to Travis?
- What will happen to Hannah?
- Will Nick’s little brother stay safe?
- What happened to Nick’s mom?
- Will Nick/Tom report the robbery?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

Nick could not have been the one to commit the robbery as he was with Lacey.
Hannah might actually be crazy.
Now I know what Hannah and Nick were arguing about.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

Nick will get hurt either when attempting to get his things back or in a retaliation.
Nick will attempt to report the robbery, but his brother will be threatened and he will choose to keep quiet in order to protect him.
Someone else will let the truth out and at least Nick will have justice.

Other comments:

It's hard to imagine the story being told in another order because so far everything seems to flow perfectly with just enough answers and questions. The foreshadowing and the suspense are perfect – not over-the-top cheesy or too far-fetched from the rest of the story.
No part of the story feels repetitive either, which is very impressive considering the style of the show.
Ryan - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Based on the conclusion of the episode, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

Ryan: 5
Cliff: 4
Eddie: 2
Stacey: 3
Nick: 1

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading?

What will happen with Ryan and Megan? Will Megan tell someone what happened between her and Ryan?
How will Ryan and Stacey find out about how differently each other feels about the relationship?
At what point will Ryan realize that he's taking stealing too far? Will Ryan get caught?
How will the relationship between Ryan and Travis play out?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

Ryan is definitely taking a turn for the worse. Megan isn't such a bad person, knowing now that she has boundaries about hitting on men in relationships. Stacey is a bit thick with high hopes.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

I don’t think he’ll get caught just yet. Him and Travis will carry on down a dangerous path, with Ryan becoming more bold and reckless. His and Stacey’s relationship will fizzle.

Other comments:

This is the only episode that seems to have some repeat scenes. I think the dialogue in Cliff’s and Ryan’s episode will be the biggest difference in those scenes. Ryan is a dick.
Eddie - END OF EPISODE SURVEY

Having read all the individual character episodes, rank the main characters in order of who appeals to you/you relate to the most:

Ryan: 5
Cliff: 4
Eddie: 2
Stacey: 2
Nick: 1

At the end of the episode, what questions do you have about where things are heading in the finale?

Will Eddie’s and Eric’s feud end there?
Did Travis mean what he said about Ryan, and if so was he actually please when Ryan brought him those other stolen goods?
What’s the deal with the bowie knife?

What questions did this episode answer for you?

Eddie was not the married man. I know why Eddie was silent and distant. I know why Eddie considered Ryan’s offer to rob people who have wronged them. Eddie is calculating. Cara loves to feel desired, for whatever reason the guy has.
What is your prediction for where this character ends up after the finale episode?

Eddie will come out on top. He will not continue to see Cara for lack of respect. There will be a larger altercation between him and Eric that will lead to questions about the robbery.

What do you predict the outcome of the finale to be?

Stacey will fall out with Ryan and have her dad help Nick to get his things back and bring the truth to light. And Nick will find a bit of comfort knowing he has trustworthy, parental figures helping him. Ryan will be furious and do something rash that will also backfire and he will have serious regrets about his becoming a “new man.” Cliff will hear the truth that Hannah concocted this whole mess and feel proud of her revenge-seeking ways, oblivious to the fact that it is a sign of her feelings for Nick.

Were there any story inconsistencies or things that didn't make sense in your particular order?

No, the amount of details left out from each person’s story only added to the suspense.

Other comments:

Very well written – I’m looking forward to reading/seeing the rest of the series.
I’m very curious about how everything plays out.
I would love to hear the dialogue because I can imagine this being both a very serious drama and very funny.
Episode: Finale
Travis pulls out a wad of fifty-dollar notes, licking his finger and isolating ten of them, handing over half a grand to Ryan, who looks particularly pleased with himself. Travis studies him for a moment, then bursts into a smile, expressing his surprise that Ryan does have a set of stones in him after all. Ryan laughs with him, and Travis moves to the fridge, grabbing a beer and offering one to Ryan. Ryan refuses at first, but gives in when Travis insists they’ve got a reason to celebrate.

Ryan sits down and takes a long sip from his beer. He lets out a refreshing gasp, and then asks Travis where they go from here. Travis excitedly explains that anything more Ryan wants to get rid of, Travis is the man for it. Ryan nods in agreement, asking if Travis has any ideas about where to start. Travis tells him he’d be better off making the trip to Wellington for any future heists, to avoid being a suspect in any local crimes. Ryan finishes his beer, thanking Travis for the refreshment and walks out the door, promising that he’ll have something productive very soon.

Ryan arrives home and notices the front door is wide open. He cautiously walks in, calling out for Cliff and Eddie as he does so. He hears a reply from Cliff, telling him to come to the kitchen. He enters the room, and is shocked to see Nick sitting at the table with Cliff, both of them appearing relatively calm; despite Nick holding a bag of frozen peas to his temple. Ryan demands to know what’s going on, and Cliff encourages him to sit down, that there’s something they really need to talk about.

Ryan shakes his head in disbelief at what Cliff has just told him, repeating it all out loud to himself to try and wrap his head around it. Hannah still harbors bad feelings towards Nick after their break up. Hannah and her friends came into their house when she knew they were out and took a bunch of their possessions, going and planting it in Nick’s house in the process. Then subtly planted the idea in Cliff’s head that Nick was responsible.

Ryan dismisses this entire turn of events, stating it’s all a little too elaborate for his liking. He then questions why Cliff even has a reason to
believe all this nonsense, it’s Nick’s word versus Hannah. Nick quickly
defends himself, quizzing Ryan on how much of a lunatic he would be to
come round here and try lie to Cliff about all this. Cliff calmly explains to Ryan
that at this point, he has no reason not to believe Nick’s story, all the moving
pieces seem to match up.

Still unsatisfied, Ryan interrogates Cliff as to why after all this time he’s so
quick to believe Hannah is a liar. Cliff addresses the fact that Hannah never
even told him that she used to date Nick; as proven by some of the photos on
Nicks phone, and that if she’s lying about that then what else is she willing to
lie about.

Ryan finally resigns, sitting down beside them. He suggests perhaps he
owes Nick an apology, who humbly accepts it. He then asks what the plan is
from here, clearly they need to repay Nick. Cliff says they’ll wait for Eddie to
get home, and they can plan their next course of action together. As he says
this, they hear the front door open.

Stacey storms into the room, closely followed by Eddie who tries to
explain that he tried to stop her. Before Ryan has a chance to ask what’s
wrong, Stacey demands to know how they got their property back. As Ryan
tries to feed her the same lie about the police, she interrupts him, explaining
that her father is the police officer is the one who came around and that the
cops had nothing to do with it.

Ryan attempts to spin the argument back at her; angrily asking why she
never mentioned her father was a cop. She quickly shuts down his attempt at
a defense, slamming the irrelevance of that information, then once again
demands to know what happened.

While this is going on, Eddie addresses the elephant in the room and asks
why Nick is there. Ryan pulls Stacey aside and out of the room, and Eddie sits
down to receive the explanation from Cliff.

Stacey sits in stunned silence on Ryan’s bed, processing the absurd
information she’s just been given. Ryan claims that he reacted the same way,
that he couldn’t believe Hannah would go to all that effort, and Stacey’s eyes
light up as a light bulb illuminates in her head, whispering June’s name aloud.
Ryan asks who June is and what she has to do with anything, and Stacey
says her younger sister June hangs out with Hannah, and more than likely helped her move all their property.

As Ryan lets the thought sink in and agrees that makes sense, Stacey turns on him again, declaring the real reason she’s angry is because he lied to her. Ryan jumps on the defensive again instantly, justifying the lie by the fact that Stacey told them not to do anything silly, and he didn’t want to put her in a difficult position. She appears defeated and expresses that she thought they wouldn’t be the kind of couple that lied to each other.

This angers Ryan, who mutters that maybe they’re not the couple she thought they was. When she asks what he said, he repeats himself much louder, telling her to wake up and stop living in this fantasy, everybody has secrets and a relationship can’t have complete 100% honesty. She begins to tear up, and he relaxes a little, sitting down beside her and putting his arm around her. He apologizes, and rationalizes that they’ve all had a long day and should maybe get some rest.

She decides it’s for the best that she sleeps at her own place tonight, and stands up to leave. As she leaves, she matter-of-factly states it’s his fault that he didn’t know her father was a cop, as he hasn’t made the effort to meet him. Ryan resolves to fix that the in the near future, promising they’ll both have dinner at her parents place in the next week.

Ryan closes the front door behind Stacey, and then walks back into the lounge where Cliff, Eddie and Nick sit together. Ryan asks if Eddie is all up to speed, which replies that despite the craziness of the situation he thinks he follows. Cliff asks what the next part of the plan is, and Eddie suggests that they go see Travis about getting Nick’s stuff back tomorrow.

Travis blinks violently at Eddie and Cliff in disbelief as they finishing explaining their story to him. He looks over to Ryan who stands in the corner, who shrugs back at him with an “it is what it is” expression on his face. Eddie gets to the point, and asks if they can just give the money back and get the property back, met with a quick and firm dismissal from Travis.
Eddie ponders for a second, thinking Travis misheard him. He asks once again, can they simply return the money Travis gave them and take Nick’s property back. Travis plainly spells it out for them; that’s not going to happen.

Cliff jumps to aggression, furiously asking why not. Travis acknowledges that they’re all friends, but primarily he’s running a business; albeit an underground one. At the end of the day, he’s out to make money, and he’s not in the habit of doing product returns with unsatisfied suppliers. He states that this was their mistake, and that if they want Nick’s stuff back, they’re going to have to buy it at the rate he sells it to customers for.

Cliff steps in to grab Travis and is pulled back by Ryan, whispering in his ear that it’s not worth it and they’re just going to have to do what Travis is asking. Cliff storms out and Ryan follows, leaving Eddie sitting alone with Travis. He calmly explains that they’re going to get the money, and after that they’re through. If their friendship means nothing to Travis now, he has no time in the future for them.

Stacey walks into her parent’s house and exchanges a quick greeting with her mother and father, telling them she thought she might just come visit on her day off. They warmly welcome her, offering her refreshments in the process. She thanks them, and then explains she’s going to speak to June.

She walks into June’s room, who removes her headphones as soon as she spots her sister entering the room. Stacey shuts the door behind her as June inquires what’s going on. Stacey leans in close and whispers to her aggressively, asking if she helped Hannah Larson rob Ryan’s house and frame Nick Davis in the process. June stutters in response, denying any involvement, and receives a push against the wall from Stacey.

Stacey leans in close and hisses at her once more, asking if she had anything to do with it. June confesses quickly, telling her that Hannah only did it because Nick hurt her. Stacey begins to walk out, and June pleads with her not to tell their father. Stacey explains that she won’t, if only to prevent her father from experiencing the disappointment. Stacey walks out to the kitchen again, her scowl instantly transforming to a fake smile as she expresses her excitement to be with her family.
Cliff sits in silence at a table at the pub, nostrils flaring as he breathes heavily, while Ryan and Eddie carry over a round of beers to their table. Nick walks in and spots them, walking over and sitting down. Eddie thanks him for meeting them there, and then explains what happened at Travis’.

Cliff declares that no matter what, they’re getting Nick what he’s owed, who is just happy that they are even trying to make amends. Eddie says it’s simple, they’ve got the money Travis gave them so they’ll just fork up the extra from their own funds, and the problem is solved.

Cliff is less than enthusiastic about that idea, finally confessing to Eddie that he lost his job and that extra funds are non-existent for him. Eddie acknowledges his struggle, then asks if anyone has the extra money. He’s the first to suggest that if Hannah caused all this, maybe they should be stealing from her, but is quickly shot down by Nick, who explains that trying to get back at somebody is what got them in this mess in the first place. Ryan agrees with Nick, and tells them he has a plan that could never be linked back to them.

Back at the house, the four of them huddle around a computer as Ryan shows them a video of an advertisement for a concert known as The Happening, announced to be in Wellington the following weekend. Eddie, Cliff and Nick express their confusion as to why they are being shown an ad for this concert, and Ryan leans back with a smirk on his face as he declares that everyone is going to be there.

Still confused, the boys tell Ryan to stop playing around and tell them what’s going on. Ryan stands up and begins pacing the room, explaining that The Happening is the next big thing as far as concerts go, and anyone their age in the Wellington region is going to be there. Ryan appears frustrated that they still can’t figure out what he’s getting at, telling them that if everyone their age is going to be at this concert, nobody is going to be at their home. He tells them that this is the perfect opportunity to take a trip over to Wellington, break into several unoccupied houses over the course of the night and go on one large spree of burglary.

Cliff shuts him down immediately, asking Ryan if he’s recently developed some mental conditions. He addresses the lunacy of solving their burglary problems with more burglary, and is once again met with the response that as
the unemployed one Cliff needs the money more than anybody. Cliff expresses his frustration that Ryan keeps throwing that in his face, but Ryan asks if it’s any less relevant than when Cliff first suggested burglary as a solution to his monetary problems while robbing Nicks.

Eddie pipes up next, but only to show his support at Ryan’s idea, commending him on offering solutions rather than more problems. The three of them turn to face Nick, who immediately backs out, saying he wants nothing to do with this. Ryan explains that he’s the one who they’re doing all this for, and perhaps he isn’t as innocent in the entire ordeal as he claims, as he should’ve come forward to them as soon as he realized he was in possession of their property. After a bit of hesitation, Nick asks for a promise that it’s going to be as simple as Ryan claims it will be. With an arrogant smirk on his face, Ryan promises that of course it will be.

Ryan and Stacey stand on the front door of her parents place, a look of pure confidence on his face. She looks over nervously at him, and then quickly adjusts her expression to simulated excitement when her parents open the door. They enthusiastically skip the handshake with Ryan and progress directly to the hug, welcoming their future son-in-law inside.

Ryan, Stacey, Teresa, Gavin and June all sit around the dinner table, a glass of wine and empty plates in front of all the adults. Ryan looks over at June, perplexed at her quietness as she absent-mindedly shuffles her piece of steak around her plate with her fork. As he studies her, Gavin breaks his concentration by questioning his association with some less than reputable characters.

Ryan asks what he means by that, and Gavin explains that Stacey had told him that his friends are all a bit thuggish. Ryan shoots her a quick look who guiltily looks anywhere in the room but at him, then smiles at Gavin. He explains that they may be a little morally skewed, but deep down they’re all good guys. He also expresses his belief that everyone has a dark side. Gavin smiles back and informs him not everyone, his family is as pure as they come, met with a response from Ryan that they’ll see about that. Stacey quickly interrupts and draws Ryan away to help Teresa with the dishes.
On the drive home, Stacey and Ryan sit in silence, both reflecting on the night’s events. She asks what’s going on with their Nick situation, and Ryan reassures her that they’ve got it under control. When she wants to know more, Ryan insists that she really doesn’t, and that maybe if she doesn’t want him to lie then she shouldn’t ask. They return to sitting in silence.

As he pulls up outside her house, he suggests that maybe its time she met his parents, and asks when they should organize that. She mulls in silence for a moment, before replying they shouldn’t organize it, and maybe its best for both of them if they stop all future arrangements full stop. He pleads with her to give it a chance, and she climbs out of the car, telling him that if he’s not adult enough to be honest how does he expect to maintain an adult relationship. She shuts the door behind her and walks inside, leaving Ryan sitting stunned in his car.

As he sits there, he hears a knock on his window and sees Eddie standing there. He winds down the window and asks why he’s there, Eddie chuckles to himself and says that he’s sleeping with Cara and she called him over. Ryan forces a smile, then bids Eddie a good night and reverses out of the driveway and leaves.

Ryan walks into the lounge and throws his keys on the table, spotting Cliff sitting in the dark in front of the brightly lit television with a beer in hand. He grabs a beer and sits beside him, receiving a small glance from Cliff. Ryan asks if he’s heard from Hannah, and Cliff says that she’s been ringing him all day but he hasn’t answered. He says he doesn’t have enough fight left in him to confront her about what she’s done. He mutes the television and turns to Ryan with a very serious look on his face, warning him that he better know what he’s getting them into with this robbery. Ryan gives a small and nervous nod in reply. Cliff unmutes the television and returns his attention to it, and Ryan walks out of the room.

We watch as each of the main characters participates in their various activities for the night. Nick watches his drunken father scream at the horse races on the television, knocking stuff off the table as he stumbles around in a
fit of rage. Nick walks into Tom’s room and sits on the bed beside him, who looks up at him with a frightful stare as they listen to the commotion from the living room.

Cliff continues to sit in front of the television, staring blankly at the screen as he draws another sip from his beer. His phone buzzes again, and he pulls the screen to his face, noticing it’s Hannah calling again. He places the phone back on the couch, returning his attention to the television.

Eddie lies on top of Cara, thrusting furiously as loud, sharp moans escape her mouth. He has a wild grin on his face as he maneuvers his way around the bed, eventually flipping her over so she’s on top of him.

In the next room, Stacey lies in bed staring at the ceiling, eventually pressing her pillow on either side of her head to dull the muffled moans from the next room. She rolls on to her side, staring thoughtfully as she keeps her head wrapped in the pillow.

Finally, Ryan spits out the last of his toothpaste and stares at himself in the mirror. He maintains eye contact with his reflection, his face slowly twisting into a rage, before slamming his fist into the mirror and cracking it. He continues to stare himself out, breathing heavily through his nose, before noticing he’s bleeding. He runs his hand under the tap, then reaches down into the cupboard below and grabs a bandage, wrapping it around his hand multiple times and sticking it in place. He looks at himself in the mirror again, looking at himself with a hint of disgust.

Ryan sits in a station wagon outside Nick’s house in the late afternoon, the engine still running as he waits. He pulls out his phone and dials Stacey’s number, only reaching her voicemail. He leaves a message that he’s once again sorry for what he did, and that he’s getting frustrated with talking to a computer instead of her, urging her to call him back. He cuts his message off when Nick opens the door, returning the phone to his pocket. Nick greets him, and Ryan dials Eddie’s number and calls him.

Eddie answers from the passenger seat of Cliff’s van, and is told by Ryan that he’s picked up Nick and they’re about to leave. Eddie tells them to let them know when they reach Upper Hutt, and the two exchange farewells then hang up.
Ryan and Nick exchange small amounts of small talk as they drive, without getting into any extreme detail. They sit in uncomfortable silence for a long period of time in between rounds of conversation. Nick asks why Ryan thinks Travis wouldn’t just do a straight return if they’re all apparently such good friends with him. Ryan explains it very plainly to Nick, he told Travis not to take their offer no matter what.

Nick studies Ryan’s expression for a while, and when he sees no hint of a smile asks if he’s serious. Ryan says he’s deadly serious. Nick gets heated, asking why they’re even going to rob these houses if they could’ve resolved everything with a straight trade with Travis. Ryan turns to him with a cold expression on his face, and says that Cliff, Eddie and himself end up with nothing if they went that route. As Nick struggles to wrap his head around it, Ryan calmly states that there’s no way he was walking away with nothing.

Eddie and Cliff pull their van up in front of a house and ring Ryan once more. They look around as the phone rings, and notice that despite the lack of daylight now there are no house lights on down most of the road. Ryan answers, and Eddie tells him that he was right, and it seems everyone in the area is at this concert. Ryan smugly replies that he knew that would be the case, and says him and Nick are just finding a street to target now. Eddie says him and Cliff are going with this street, and Ryan reminds him to move quickly through each house, grabbing whatever is small but valuable such as laptops and consoles. The two pull on a couple of Halloween masks and climb out of the van, armed with small flashlights.

Cliff moves around the back of one house and feels each window to see if one is open. He eventually discovers a window high up that is slightly ajar. He gives Eddie a boost up, who slots himself through the narrow window, then runs to open the back door. Cliff follows him inside, and they begin their sweep, immediately grabbing a couple of computers in the lounge. Eddie asks Cliff why he didn’t divulge that he was fired, and Cliff claims he was embarrassed, and didn’t want to rely on the others to pay his bills unless he absolutely had to. He tells Eddie to concentrate on the task at hand, and the
two of them manage to fill an entire duffel bag each. Cliff hands his to Eddie and tells him to run it back out to the van while he moves to the neighbor’s house and attempts to find a way in. He jumps the fence and runs to the next backdoor, quickly glancing through the windows to make sure no lights are on. He barely searches for a few seconds before noticing a suspiciously out of place rock in the garden next to the back door, lifting it and finding a key underneath. Eddie arrives from around the corner with empty duffel bags again, and the two share a laugh about easy this is and how poor the security around this area is.

Ryan and Nick sit in the car, scanning the street they are parked on for any lights. Like Eddie and Cliff, they also notice a lack of people in any of the surrounding houses, so determine this is as good an area as any to pick some houses. They climb out of the car, sliding the Halloween masks over their faces and move towards the nearest house. Ryan whispers to Nick to stay close to him and they should avoid any trouble.

The two approach the back door of the first house, and both begin scanning for any particular entry points with their flashlights. Nick approaches one of the windows and slides a stick up into the gap, nudging the latch and breaking it free. Ryan commends him, and Nick explains he was locked out of his house a few times and had to get resourceful. Ryan jokes that their windows must be almost as secure as keeping their key under the doormat; the joke unappreciated and responded to with silence. The two enter the house and make a quick sweep, each of them picking up a few items. As Ryan fumbles around a desk looking for something, Nick opens up a closet and sees a large amount of shoes, and proclaims to Ryan that they’ve hit the jackpot. Ryan appears confused, asking how that is considered the jackpot. Nick exclaims that these guys must be one of these shoe-heads, who collect all these limited edition shoes, and that these are actually worth a fortune. Ryan congratulates him, and they load up both of their duffel bags with shoes.

The two of them return their first bags to the car, and grab the second lot of empty bags, heading to a house on the opposite side of the street to the first. They approach the back door again, and this time Ryan tries the handle first. The two of them can’t believe their luck when the door is unlocked, also
sharing a laugh that these people really don’t know how to keep their houses secure.

They walk in and immediately sweep the lounge, once again procuring a small range of items almost instantly. They then divide up and move to different bedrooms. Ryan tells Nick to be quick about it, he intends to go through two more houses before they leave.

Cliff and Eddie return another lot of bags to the van, noting they’ve acquired eight bags of goods total. They climb into the front seat of the van and Eddie dials Ryan’s number. When Ryan answers, Eddie tells him that they’ve been through four houses, so they’re going to get out of the area now. Ryan tells them good work, and that he’ll call when they’re on the way out, and they can meet back at home.

Ryan hangs up his phone and returns it to his pocket, and experiences a cramp from his bandaged hand in the process. He unravels the bandage to give his hand a bit of fresh air, and stretches each of his fingers out. He gets a fright when he hears a crash from one of the next rooms. His attention lapsing, he drops his bloodied bandage and runs over to the next bedroom, duffel bag in hand.

He reaches the next room and turns on the light, only to discover Nick locked in a scuffle with a man much bigger and rougher looking than he is. The man throws Nick against the cupboard and punches him in the stomach, before grabbing him by the shirt and throwing him on the ground. Without even thinking, Ryan runs up and tackles the man as he stands over Nick, sending him crashing into the wall behind him. Ryan stands up tall and delivers a punch to the man’s face, which is swiftly countered and repaid with a punch to his own. Ryan stumbles back, adjusting the mask on his face so the eyeholes align with his eyes again, and pulling Nick to his feet as the man recovers for a moment. The two of them stand in his way, fists at the ready for more engagement. As they pause for a moment, Ryan finally notices the girl sitting on the bed in the corner, wailing in tears as she attempts to dial 111 on her cellphone.
As Nick runs at the man and attempts to throw some wild swings, Ryan storms over in the girls direction, and tries to wrestle the phone out of the girls hand. As he grabs it, she bites his hand, directly into his already bleeding cut from the mirror. He grunts a little in pain, and then gives her a forceful shove, sending her tumbling off the bed, releasing her jaw and the encased hand in the process. He throws the cellphone on the ground and stomps on it, smashing the screen into pieces immediately.

Straight afterwards he looks up, only to discover Nick is on the ground once more getting kicked in the ribs by the man. Ryan pauses for a moment and evaluates the man’s attention on his incapacitated accomplice. He eyes up Nick’s duffel bag, dropped beside the door when his assailant engaged him. Ryan looks back at the man, and notices the man is so consumed with dealing to Nick that he is unaware of Ryan’s current presence. Making the split second decision, Ryan runs to the door and scoops up the duffel bag, continuing outside the door and scooping up his own, before bursting out the front door and running back to the car. He throws the bags in the back and climbs into the drivers seat, roaring the engine to life and bursting down the road without illuminating his headlights. He watches in the rear vision mirror as the man runs out on to the road behind him, screaming like a madman. From the man’s perspective, Ryan’s number plate is unintelligible as he burns off into the darkness.

Ryan pants heavily, his breaths turning into a borderline panic attack, as he quickly navigates the nearby streets and finds his way onto the motorway. He pulls onto it and builds himself up to open road speeds, suddenly aware of his lack of headlights. He switches them on, and his panic builds when he sees flashing blue and red lights approaching on the opposite side of the motorway. He ducks slightly in his seat, and then watches as they scream straight past him, turning down the road he just entered the motorway from. He builds his speed to 120km/h, determined to get out of the area as quick as humanly possible.

As he pulls away into the night, his phone starts ringing beside him. The sudden noise in the otherwise silent vehicle shocks him, exacerbating his already panicked state. He pulls it up and notices it’s Stacey calling. He answers the phone, and she very seriously asks if he wants to talk. He
questions whether she still wants complete honesty from him. She replies that of course she does, nothing has changed. Ryan takes a deep breath and confesses to her, he’s pretty sure he just got Nick Davis arrested for burglary.
EXT. STREET - NIGHT (FLASHFORWARD)

RYAN MEYERS (25) and CLIFF JACKSON(24) sit in a van parked on the side of a road, both dressed in dark hoodies. Ryan is a well groomed young man with light brown hair, trimmed stubble and an average build. Cliff is a very rugged looking character, shaggy dark brown hair, patchy and scruffy facial hair with a rather buff build.

Cliff is in the drivers seat and Ryan in the passenger. The vans lights are shut off with all the windows rolled up. Ryan is looking around anxiously, while Cliff calmly sits and watches the road, eating a bag of chips. A rock song plays quietly from the vans stereo. A cellphone starts ringing, giving Ryan a fright. He pulls it out of his pocket and looks at the screen.

RYAN
Shit. It’s Stacey.

CLIFF
So? Don’t answer it.

RYAN
I can’t just not answer it.

CLIFF
Why not?

RYAN
Because I dunno, she’ll find it suspicious or -

Ryan cuts himself off as he hits answer and brings the phone to his ear, his other hand incessantly tapping on the door handle.

RYAN
Hey - uh - what’s up?

Ryan listens for her response, looking over at Cliff who has returned to watching the road and eating his chips.

RYAN (CONT’D)
I’m just out with the guys. Just you know -

Ryan searches for something to say, Cliff mimes driving a car.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Just going for a drive -- Yea just around town -- Look maybe another

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
Ryan returns the phone to his pocket and sees Cliff looking at him with a smug grin on his face.

RYAN
What?

CLIFF
I didn’t say anything. I just don’t get why you answered the fucken thing.

RYAN
That’s the third time she’s called tonight. Just - shut up okay? Watch the road.

CLIFF
Watch the road? I don’t know if you noticed Ryan, but there isn’t fucken nothing happening out there!

RYAN
(whispering)
Jesus, keep your voice down!

CLIFF
(laughing)
You’re acting like we’re on the main road of fucken Wellington. Small town Ryan. Everybody’s either at the pub or in bed. Nobody’s around. Nobody can fucken hear us. Just settle down, you’re way too wound up.

RYAN
Well, could you please bring your noise down just a little bit and treat this even slightly serious? That’s all I’m saying.
CLIFF
Well maybe you could lighten up a little, have a bit of fun. That’s all I’m saying.

Cliff carries on eating his chips and Ryan plants his forehead against the window, staring out into the night.

CLIFF
So what mask do you want?

RYAN
What do you mean?

CLIFF
What mask do you want? I grabbed a few. Here -

Ryan sighs as Cliff yanks up a duffel bag from the back. He places it on the seat in between them, gesturing for Ryan to open it up. Ryan opens the zip and pulls out a Friday the 13th Hockey mask. He stares down into the bag, shaking his head.

RYAN
Why do we need masks? I thought we were just scoping the place out.

CLIFF
They’re just in case.

RYAN
Just in case?!

CLIFF
Yeah, don’t worry though. Doesn’t look like they’re gonna be leaving the house anytime soon.

The driveway ahead of them is lit up suddenly by the headlights of an old Ford Falcon. Ryan and Cliff both duck down, trying to hide themselves behind the dashboard.

CLIFF
I’ve been wrong before though.

The car lunges violently down the driveway and on to the road, a scraggly looking middle aged man at the wheel. He tears off down the road, swerving slightly side to side with a very drunken nature.

Cliff immediately pulls out his phone and quickly taps the screen, bringing the phone to his ear.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Who are you -

Cliff turns to him and makes a shushing motion.

CLIFF
Hey Eddie, the old man’s just left
- - Na no one, so we’ll go have a
nosey - - Okay I’ll call you later
- - Yea I will.

Cliff hangs up the phone and reaches into the duffel bag in the centre, pulling out a Scream mask and placing it over his head.

RYAN
What the hell are you doing?

CLIFF
Put a mask on. We’re going in.

RYAN
Wait, what?!

CLIFF
The old man’s gone, who knows how long for, now’s our opportunity.

RYAN
We were supposed to just look! And how do you know Nick isn’t going to be in there?

CLIFF
Because Eddie’s been following him since 6 o’clock tonight. And I don’t have time for you pussying out right now Ryan. Put on a fucking mask, and get in there with me.

RYAN
No way, this isn’t what we planned.

CLIFF
Well I’m going in.

Cliff yanks the keys from the ignition and dangles them in front of Ryan’s face.

CLIFF
And would you look at that?! I’m taking the fucken keys with me. So (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CLIFF (cont’d)
unless you want to just sit out
here with your dick in your hands
while I search the house by myself,
I highly suggest you follow me in
there and make yourself useful. I
don’t have time for little bitches
Ryan.

Cliff climbs out the car and starts to walk up the driveway,
fists clenched at his sides. Ryan tracks him up the driveway
with his eyes, then angrily slams the dashboard with his
hand.

RYAN
(muttering)
For fuck’s sake...

Ryan reaches into the bag and pulls out the first mask he
finds, a chimpanzee mask, and throws it over his face. He
climbs out of the van and runs down the driveway after
Cliff, pausing to scan the streets and surrounding houses
halfway up.

TITLE SEQUENCE - KLEPTOS

INT. BOYS HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK TO PRESENT)

Ryan sits on his bed, head between his hands. All around him
his room is in disarray, drawers thrown out and emptied,
items scraped off his desk. EDDIE TERRY (26) walks into the
doorway and the two of them sit in silence for a moment.
Eddie has long, medium brown hair with a clean shaven face
and a very lean build.

EDDIE
What are you missing?

RYAN
Laptop, TV, Playstation, a bunch of
other stuff.

Ryan stands up and kicks a bunch of clothes that have been
thrown on the ground.

RYAN (CONT’D)
I mean, they took my deodorant. My
deodorant!

He walks over to his window and stares outside, watching the
road suspiciously.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN (CONT’D)
What’d they take of yours?

EDDIE
Pretty much the same. My laptop, TV, a couple of jackets and jeans. Just anything they could.

RYAN
Arseholes man.

The two of them hear a loud yell from somewhere in the house.

CLIFF
For fucks sake!

Ryan and Eddie run to Cliffs room, where he is furiously pacing back and forth.

EDDIE
What’s going on?

CLIFF
They took my fucken Red Bands man.

RYAN
Ay?

CLIFF
My fucken boots! You take my computer and shit, I can deal with it. You touch my fucken Red Bands...

Cliff looks up at Ryan and Eddie, eyes lit up with rage.

CLIFF
We’ve gotta find out who fucken did this and deal to them.

RYAN
Alright settle down Dredd, it’s 1 o’clock in the morning, we can’t exactly launch a full scale investigation now.

EDDIE
Look, we’ll talk to the neighbors and the cops in the morning, not much we can do now.
CLIFF
Did you figure out how they got in?

RYAN
Bathroom window.

CLIFF
It’s broken?

RYAN
Na, we must’ve left it unlocked.

CLIFF
Shit.

RYAN
Look, just go to sleep, we’ll deal with this tomorrow.

Ryan walks back to his room and drops down onto his bed. He stares at the roof, eyes wide open.

INT. BOYS HOUSE - DAY

Ryan stands in front of the stove, tossing a few pieces of bacon around a pan as the oil sizzles loudly. Cliff walks into the kitchen and leans against the bench, visibly frustrated as he talks on the phone.

CLIFF
Are you gonna send someone round or not? - - Well that’s fucken great, thank you sooo much for your service officer - - Oh I wasn’t serious, I’m not even remotely grateful - - I will have a pleasant day! Thank you very much! Bye-bye now!

Cliff hangs the phone up and slides it across the bench with speed. Ryan takes the pan off the heat and turns the element off, then leans on the bench opposite Cliff.

RYAN
That didn’t sound good.

CLIFF
Didn’t it? What gave you that fucken impression Ryan?
RYAN
Jesus, sorry.

They hear the front door open, and Eddie comes running into the room.

EDDIE
Good news!

RYAN
What is it?

EDDIE
I talked to Brent -

CLIFF
Who the fuck is Brent?

EDDIE
Dude who lives across the road. He said he saw a black Civic hanging around for a few hours outside last night.

RYAN
Well that’s a good start.

EDDIE
You call the cops?

RYAN
We did.

CLIFF
They said they’d look into sending someone round, but they’ve got bigger shit on their plate apparently.

EDDIE
And insurance?

RYAN
We’re not covered.

EDDIE
Why the fuck not?

RYAN
Cause they didn’t force their way in.

(Continued)
EDDIE
You’ve gotta be fucken kidding me.

They hear a knock at the door, Eddie goes to answer it.

EDDIE
(O.S.)
Oh, hey Stacey.

He walks back into the room followed by STACEY KELLY (23), a girl Ryan has been seeing recently. She’s a brunette of average height, quite attractive but with a simple style of fashion about her. She immediately looks to where the television was, confused.

STACEY
What’s going on? Where’s the TV?

CLIFF
Fucked if I know.

STACEY
What do you mean?

RYAN
Our house got broken into last night. Well - not broken into as such but -

CLIFF
Robbed. We got fucken robbed.

STACEY
Oh my god! That’s horrible, when did it happen?

RYAN
Well we got home from the pub at about 1, was sometime in the.... six? Hours leading up to that.

STACEY
Did you call the cops?

RYAN
Yea we did, nothing they can do.

STACEY
Insurance.

EDDIE
Nope.

(CONTINUED)
STACEY
Jeez, anybody see anything?

CLIFF
Well, ol-mate -

EDDIE
Brent.

CLIFF
- across the road, reckons he saw a black Civic parked outside for a few hours last night.

STACEY
Well surely that’s helpful for the cops.

Eddie and Cliff each let out a small, smug laugh.

STACEY
What?

CLIFF
What have the cops ever done in Thorpeton Stace?

EDDIE
Gave me a fine for driving passengers on my restricted once.

CLIFF
And that’s all they ever fucken do.

STACEY
So what’s the alternative?

The boys all sit in silence as they ponder her question.

RYAN
Look, let’s go talk in my room.

Ryan grabs Stacey by the hand and leads her to his bedroom, setting her down on the bed. He walks and shuts the door behind them, then gently sits down beside her.

STACEY
Please tell me you’re not going to do something stupid.

RYAN
What do you mean by something stupid?

(Continued)
STACEY
Like try and find the guy yourselves.

Ryan looks shocked that she would even suggest the thought to him.

RYAN
Of course not!

STACEY
Look, Cliff and Eddie are cool, they’re your friends, I get that. But they’re trouble Ryan –

RYAN
Listen, I hear what you’re saying –

STACEY
No, you don’t. I can guarantee those two are already plotting something idiotic, and they’re going to try drag you into it.

RYAN
... And you don’t think I know how to say no to them.

STACEY
They managed to convince you to streak Queen St.

RYAN
Okay first of all, I don’t know how you found out about that. Second, I was drunk, it doesn’t count. Third –

STACEY
And you still exhaust all your energy defending them.

Ryan sits closer to her and grabs her hand within both of his and squeezes it gently.

RYAN
Look, I’m not an idiot. I’ve known these guys for a long time, and yea we’ve done some dumb shit. And yes, they’ve convinced me to do some dumb shit. But that’s all just fun. This? I’m sensible. I’m not gonna go all vigilante on this.

(continued)
STACEY
You promise?

RYAN
I promise. And besides, all we know is it’s a black Honda Civic. you know how many black Civics there are in this town?

EXT. STREET – DAY
Ryan drives his car down the main road with Cliff in the passenger seat and Eddie in the back. Eddie excitedly points at a black Civic on the side of the road.

EDDIE
Theres one! That’s 7 nil motherfucker.

CLIFF
Fuck me you’re good at this.

EDDIE
Jesus there’s a lot of Civics in this town. Why couldn’t we get the guy who drives a fucken Range Rover to rob our place. We’d find him no problem.

RYAN
Because the kind of guy who breaks into people’s houses is the kind of guy who drives a Civic.

EDDIE
That’s true, my cousin Dan drives a Civic and he used to constantly sell me shit he’d stolen.

Cliff pivots in his seat to stare directly at Eddie.

CLIFF
So how do we know it wasn’t your fucken cousin that broke into our place?!

EDDIE
Please. Dan moved to Taupo a couple years back. Dude is living the dream...

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
That's... sad.

Eddie looks out the window and points out another Civic parked on the side of the road.

EDDIE
Eight!

CLIFF
(muttering)
Prick.

RYAN
Look, I think Stacey’s right. We need to just tell the cops that we’ve heard it’s a Civic and let them try find something.

CLIFF
Okay Ryan, I know you really like this girl. But with all due respect, she doesn’t know what the fuck she’s talking about.

RYAN
Well what’s your bright idea huh? You gonna follow every Civic in town? Kick in their front door, tear the place apart looking for our shit?

CLIFF
I mean - when you put it like that it sounds dumb. But yea, I’d thought about it.

EDDIE
That’s still a better idea than trying to get the bloody police to do anything Ryan.

RYAN
Well this isn’t getting us anywhere.

EDDIE
And that’s why we’re going to see Travis. If anyone who’s anyone had anything to do with this, he’ll know about it.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Yea well let’s just say I’m not that happy about it. That guy scares the shit out of me.

EDDIE
There’s really no reason to be scared of Travis.

EXT. TRAVIS HOUSE - DAY

TRAVIS stands on his doorstep yelling at two Jehovahs Witnesses, who shakily huddle together at the bottom of the stairs. Travis is a large, heavy set man with a beard stretching to his chest and a small prickly set of hair on his head. He has a large stretcher in both ears, and a small spike through the side of his bottom lip.

TRAVIS
I see you weasel fucks round here again, I’ll stomp your fucken head in you hear?!

JEHOVAH #1
S-sorry to bother you sir.

TRAVIS
Trying to preach the good lord to me, I made it 32 fucking years without some higher fucking being in my life, I think I’ve got this shit sorted by now!

JEHOVAH #2
Have a good day sir.

The two Jehovahs walk back out to the street, passing Eddie, Cliff and a reluctant Ryan on the way out. Ryan gives them a half-hearted smile of encouragement, and they nervously laugh back at him.

RYAN
(whispering)
Well at least we caught him in a good mood.

Travis pulls the finger at the Jehovahs as they continue to walk, ignoring his newly arrived guests.

TRAVIS
Yea that’s right, keep walking you fucking mongrels. Go spread your shit someplace else.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He looks down at Eddie at the bottom of the stairs and his demeanor instantly changes, his scowl transitioning to a large smile.

TRAVIS
Eddie fucking Terry, now what the fuck can I do for you?

EDDIE
How’s it going Travis? We just had a few questions.

TRAVIS
Well bring them on inside pal! I got something to show you that’ll blow your fucking mind.

INT. TRAVIS’ HOUSE - DAY

The boys stand in the lounge, crowded with couches along each wall with enough room for a small table in between them. A large home theater system surrounds an extremely large television, and pumps out electronic music at an extremely loud volume, leaving the three boys wincing from the bass. A larger girl lies topless on the couch asleep, a blanket failing its job at covering her nipples. Ryan leans in close to Cliff’s ear.

RYAN
(yelling)
He wasn’t kidding about blowing our mind! My ears are about to bleed.

Cliff smiles and nods, clearly unable to hear what Ryan has yelled at him. Travis nods along to the music, then hits pause on his remote, silencing the music. Ryan rubs inside his ears with his pinky.

TRAVIS
What do you think Ryan? Pretty fucking cool huh?

RYAN
It’s uh – it’s loud.

TRAVIS
Christ you’re a fucken pansy. I’ll just grab some beers. Hey Megan, wake the fuck up we’ve got guests! Introduce yourself, and for fuck’s sake cover those nips up, you’re a fucken disgrace.

(CONTINUED)
Travis walks down the hall into the kitchen, leaving the three boys in the lounge with Megan. She sits up straight and pulls the blanket up above her nipples, smiling at Eddie, Cliff and Ryan.

CLIFF
How’s it going?

MEGAN
Great thanks! I’m Megan. Sorry about the old, nipple situation there.

EDDIE
It’s cool.

MEGAN
And you guys are?

RYAN
Oh, I’m -

Travis walks back into the room armed with four open beers and hands one to each of the guys.

TRAVIS
Megan this is Eddie, Cliff, and Ryan. Eddie and Cliff are friends of mine from way back. And Ryan - well Ryan is just always there I guess.

Ryan laughs awkwardly, then looks over to Travis, who looks back with a stern look on his face. Ryan instantly brings his beer bottle to his lips, drinking a third of the bottle while glancing at everyone in the room.

MEGAN
Well, nice to meet you boys. Why don’t you take a seat?

They all go to sit on different couches around the room. As Ryan attempts to make a move, Megan taps him on the arm and gently taps the cushion next to her. Ryan musters a half smile and sits down next to her. She smiles warmly back and lays her head on her shoulder, gazing at him. Cliff and Eddie notice and smirk at each other.

TRAVIS
Ya wanna fuck her Ryan?

Ryan lets out another awkward laugh, looking over at Travis, who once again stares back with a very plain expression.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Ah - I’m good - good right now.
Thank you - thank you for the offer
though.

TRAVIS
Look if you’re worried I’m gonna be
pissed off, don’t be. Megan’s just
a slam piece.

MEGAN
Hey!

TRAVIS
Well, aren’t you?

MEGAN
That’s not the point.

Travis lets out a hearty laugh, looking at Eddie and Cliff,
who laugh along with him.

TRAVIS
Jesus she’s feisty. But that’s
enough about Megan, what can I do
for you today fellas?

Eddie clears his throat and leans forward, taking a short
sip of his beer as he does so.

EDDIE
Well, I wanted to know if you had
any - you know -

CLIFF
Goods.

EDDIE
Yea - goods - if you had any goods
come in this morning or last night?

TRAVIS
Any goods? Where’s this come from?
Last time I offered, you guys said
you didn’t want any, "less than
legitimate" items.

EDDIE
Oh no, we’re not buying. Our place
got ripped off last night.

(CONTINUED)
TRAVIS
Are you fucking serious?! 

CLIFF
Yea, we went to the pub last night, got back around 1 and the place had been ransacked.

Travis stands up and starts pacing the room, nostrils fuming as he does so.

TRAVIS
This shit, this shit fucks me off man. I tell you, it really fucks me off! Not just because motherfuckers are ripping people off without my knowledge, but because it’s you guys getting fucken ripped off man! You guys are my fucken boys! Well -

Travis motions at Eddie and Cliff, then glances over at Ryan.

TRAVIS
Well you two are my boys, and this shifty prick over here is good for a laugh every once in a while.

RYAN
That’s me, good for a laugh.

TRAVIS
Shut the fuck up. I’m sorry guys, I haven’t heard shit. Leave me a list of what’s missing and I’ll tell some people to keep an ear out, if it shows up anywhere we’ll fucken hear about it.

EDDIE
That’d be great man, thanks. I knew it wouldn’t be any of your guys that did this.

TRAVIS
Yea well don’t worry, if it was they’re not gonna be my guys any longer. We go back way further than any of those fucken losers.

(CONTINUED)
Ryan nods at the conversation, then jumps as he feels Megan’s toes running down his thigh. She laughs playfully at him, and he manages to let out a small laugh back. He stares at the roof as he finishes the rest of his beer, then looks down at his watch.

**RYAN**
Well - we should really be shooting off guys, we had a lot of shit to do.

**CLIFF**
What shit?

**MEGAN**
You can’t drive home you’ve been drinking!

**EDDIE**
(teasing)
Yea Ryan you’ve been drinking!

**TRAVIS**
C’mon Ryan I got a couple more boxes of piss that I need a hand with. I’ll chuck the barbecue on, we can get you a cab later.

Megan leans in close and places a hand on Ryan’s thigh, letting the blanket slip down and reveal a nipple in the process.

**MEGAN**
Sounds good to me.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**
A taxi pulls out from in front of Travis’ house, with a tipsy Ryan sitting in the front and a very drunk Cliff and Eddie sitting in the back. Cliff leans forward and whispers into Ryan’s ear.

**CLIFF**
So you gonna call her?

**RYAN**
I really hate you guys sometimes.

Cliff and Eddie burst into laughter. The taxi driver looks back at them in the mirror, confused.
INT. BOYS GARAGE - NIGHT

Eddie walks into the garage carrying a handful of beers, leaving a couple on a table next to Ryan and Cliff, who are both heavily invested in a game of pool between them.

EDDIE
Well, I’m gonna say it first. We’re fucked.

Ryan slams a ball into a pocket, then stands up and grabs his beer.

RYAN
We’re not fucked.

EDDIE
How exactly are we not fucked?

RYAN
So our shit’s been stolen. That’s all it is, shit. I mean, is it really that big a deal?

EDDIE
All that shit that’s missing Ryan, that’s a couple of fucken grand right there! And you’re just gonna sit there and say it’s not a big deal?

RYAN
Of course it’s a big deal, I’m just saying that dwelling on it isn’t gonna help at all.

EDDIE
So what? Shit happens? You just want to move on?

RYAN
Well what else can we do Eddie? We know it was a black Honda Civic, which as we established, is arguably the most common car in this town. Travis doesn’t know who did it, and as you put it, if “anyone who’s anyone” did it he would know. Thanks by the way, for doing your absolute best to make sure I was comfortable at Travis’ house, was a great fucking night for me!

(CONTINUED)
EDDIE
Well who’s dwelling on it now?

RYAN
Fuck this, I’m going to bed.

Cliff looks up from his beer and gives a drunken smile to Ryan.

CLIFF
Good night Ry Ry!

Ryan ignores the comment as he walks towards the house. As he’s almost out of the garage he turns around.

RYAN
If one of you could drop me at my car in the morning, that would be great.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

The school bell rings signaling lunch time, and several students exit various classrooms and start to walk out the gate. A teacher stands out the front of the gate, checking the students lunch passes. A van pulls around the corner and cruises up slowly next to the main gate, piking the teacher’s interest. Cliff is behind the wheel, waiting casually.

HANNAH LARSON (17) approaches the main gate of the school, a short blonde girl, heavily made up with her school skirt exposing half her thigh. Cliff winds down the passenger window and shoots her a grin, which the teacher notices.

Hannah flashes her lunch pass to the teacher, then runs up to the passenger door of the van and climbs in. The teacher runs over just behind her, presenting himself at the window.

CLIFF
Can I help you there pal?

TEACHER
Just talking to Miss Larson here. You’re not really supposed to be picked up by strange men for lunch.

HANNAH
Oh he’s not a strange man he’s my boyfriend.

(Continued)
TEACHER
Well, regardless, I’m not allowed
to let you run off with someone the
school isn’t familiar with,
especially one driving such a -

The teacher eyes up the van from back to front.

TEACHER
- questionable choice of vehicle.

CLIFF
The fuck you mean questionable?

TEACHER
Look mister, you can’t just drive
up to a school in a dodgy looking
van like this and pick up a
student, girlfriend or not.

CLIFF
Okay, well you look here mister. I
thought I’d be a charming cunt and
pick my girlfriend up for a nice
lunch out, and to be honest you’re
kind of fucking with the mood I
really wanted to set. So we’ll be
off now, you’ll see Hannah here in
an hour or so when lunch is up.

TEACHER
Hannah, you get out of that vehicle
right -

HANNAH
Sorry mister, you heard him, you’re
fucking up the mood.

She winds the window up and Cliff speeds off. The teacher
chases them into the road.

TEACHER
(yelling)
You get back here right now!

INT. CAFE - DAY

Hannah sits at a table in a cafe, sipping on a milkshake.
Cliff walks over and sits down opposite her with a bottle of
cola, cracking it open with a loud pop and taking a large
sip.
CLIFF
So how’s school today?

HANNAH
Pretty shit. Nick’s being a fucking arsehole again.

CLIFF
Who the fuck’s Nick?

HANNAH
Nick Davis?

Cliff shrugs at Hannah, who scoffs audibly.

HANNAH
I talk about him all the time!

CLIFF
Okay, what’s this Nick guy doing?

HANNAH
Just the usual, calling me a bitch and a slut in class —

CLIFF
He calls you a slut? Like, to your face?

HANNAH
Yeah!

CLIFF
Why, what’d you do to him?

HANNAH
I wouldn’t get with him at Emma’s on Saturday night.

CLIFF
You were at Emma’s on Saturday night? Why wasn’t I invited?

HANNAH
Because it’s just some shitty college party, you wouldn’t like it.

Cliff leans back in his seat and nods, realising what she actually means.
CLIFF
You mean you didn’t want me there.

HANNAH
Well you did punch Mark Rivers in
the face last time.

CLIFF
And?

HANNAH
He’s 16 years old Cliff.

CLIFF
That fucker had it coming. And so
does this fucken Nick character by
the sounds of it.

HANNAH
For god’s sake Cliff, calm down!
You go tracking down Nick and
everyone at school will be talking
about it. Drop it. He’s just a
pathetic little loser. Thinks he’s
so fucken cool with his shitty
little Civic.

Cliff perks up and stares at Hannah, eyes alight.

CLIFF
Did you just say a shitty little
Civic?

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Ryan stands over a trench, dressed in stubbies and a t-shirt
with a orange safety vest overtop, hammering some boards up
onto some pegs as framework. JEROME holds up the other end,
a buff Samoan with nothing on underneath his orange safety
vest and his t-shirt wrapped around his head as a bandana.
They both hammer their ends in, then walk over to the
trailer to grab another board.

JEROME
She a janet?

RYAN
Who?

JEROME
That girl you’ve been texting.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Oh right. What’s a janet?

JEROME
Is she mean? You know, like Janet Jackson?

Ryan laughs as he grabs a board and carts it over to the trench.

RYAN
Janet Jackson is your standard for a hot girl?

JEROME
Yeah bro she’s gangsta. So is she?

Ryan smiles to himself, then looks up at Jerome, who has dropped all his tools while he waits for a reply.

RYAN
Yeah, she’s a Janet.

JEROME
Ohhhhh brother! Got a picture ow?

RYAN
Not on me.

JEROME
Oh fuck. What’s her name?

RYAN
Stacey. I’ll bring her along to the pub one night.

JEROME
Ow, be careful, she might decide she likes dark chocolate once she sees this.

Ryan erupts into full on laughter.

RYAN
Yea, she just might.

They both look up to the sound of gravel getting sprayed by tires, to see Cliff’s van speeding over the rough ground to park up beside them.

JEROME
Who’s this gangsta?

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Trust me, he’s no gangsta.

Cliff brings the van to a stop, his wheels skidding in the gravel as he does so. He climbs out in a hurry, running over to Ryan, who places the board he’s holding down and walks over to meet him.

RYAN
Cliff, you’ve gotta get out of here. Dad will flip his shit if he sees you here.

CLIFF
I know who took our shit.

Ryan is taken aback by Cliff’s words, taking a moment to process what he’s been told.

RYAN
You know, or you think you know?

CLIFF
Well I don’t know 100%, but I’m pretty fucken confident.

RYAN
Well who is it?

CLIFF
Some asshole from Hannah’s school called Nick Davis. Apparently a fucken little prick. Hannah says he drives a piece of shit black Civic.

RYAN
Well so do a lot of people, that doesn’t mean he -

CLIFF
He hates Hannah, because she wouldn’t get with him at a few parties. So apparently also hates me, because I’m the reason she won’t. She turns him down on Saturday night, what does he do? Goes straight to our house to make himself feel better.

RYAN
I mean, sure it makes sense. But you really think a college kid would break into our house and steal all that shit?
Ryan's father DEAN MEYERS (52) is walking past on the other side of the site. He is a lean and muscular man for his age, his dusty blonde hair only just showing signs of receding.

DEAN
Cliff! Get the fuck off my building site!

CLIFF
Won't be a second Mr Meyers!

Dean starts to march over to where Ryan and Cliff are talking.

DEAN
I'm not fucking around Cliff! You're not supposed to be here.

RYAN
Look, get out of here okay? Dad's in a shitty mood, he'll probably try kick your arse. We'll talk tonight.

Cliff starts to walk back to his van, his energy level high.

CLIFF
Alright sounds good, but get excited man! We might have this fucken guy!

RYAN
Just, don't get too excited just yet okay? Why aren't you at work anyway?

CLIFF
I - ah - got the afternoon off. See ya tonight!

Cliff runs back to the van and climbs in, just as Dean arrive beside Ryan.

CLIFF
See ya Mr Meyers!

DEAN
You fucken smug little shit! Get the fuck out of here!

Cliff starts the van up and tears off across the yard, spreading gravel in a cloud as he does so. Dean turns to Ryan and points his finger in his face.

(CONTINUED)
DEAN
You tell your fucken friends to stay the fuck off my site during the day okay?! Last thing I fucken need is OSH coming down here waving their dicks around because some dumb fuck stands on a nail when he shouldn’t even be here.

RYAN
Yea I’m sorry Dad, I’ll tell them later.

DEAN
(muttering)
Like fuck you will.

Dean walks off at a brisk pace, cursing and muttering under his breath.

JEROME
Faow. Bossman in a mood today.

RYAN
Yea, he is.

INT. BOYS HOUSE - NIGHT
Ryan walks into the house to see Eddie and Cliff standing around the dining room table, excitedly pacing around with beers in hand discussing the latest information. Hannah sits in one of the chairs watching the two converse.

EDDIE
So we go round there tomorrow night or something, we scope it out a bit and then make a move from there?

CLIFF
Yea, I reckon we just wait there for a while. Get an idea of what him and the parents get up to at night.

HANNAH
Parent.

CLIFF
Huh?

(CONTINUED)
HANNAH
Just the one, parent that is. He only lives with his Dad.

EDDIE
Even easier then.

Ryan sets his keys down on the table and stands in the doorway to the lounge, looking at his friends.

RYAN
Wait, what exactly are you guys discussing?

CLIFF
How we go about checking if our shit is still at this guys house.

RYAN
And you know where he lives?

HANNAH
He lives on Albert St.

EDDIE
Real quiet neighbourhood, nothing ever going on down there.

CLIFF
We’re gonna go in tomorrow night, figure out their schedules, map the place out.

RYAN
I’m not doing it.

Cliff turns and looks at Ryan in confusion.

CLIFF
What?

RYAN
I’m not gonna be a part of this.

CLIFF
You’ve gotta be a part of this Ryan. It’s your shit that got stolen as well.

RYAN
I think we should just go and see the cops, tell them we’ve found out where the guy lives -
CLIFF
I don’t wanna hear about the fucken cops Ryan! You heard me make that phone call yesterday. You heard them say that they’ve got bigger shit on their plate. And you wanna rely on them to get the job done?

RYAN
I don’t want to rely on them at all. I just don’t want to go breaking any laws just to get our stuff back.

CLIFF
We’re taking back our shit, how is that against the fucken law?

EDDIE
He might not have the whole legality aspect down, but Cliff’s got a point Ryan. This is our property, our problem. We’re not going to the police for this.

Ryan starts pacing the room frantically, throwing his arms desperately to his friends.

RYAN
This isn’t us! This isn’t what we do! Sure, we steal a road cone every now and then when we’re fucked up, but what you’re suggesting is a - is a fucken burglary! The cops can get our shit back! They can press charges against the little fuck! We do this, we’re no better than he is.

Cliff stands up angrily, and walks towards Nick until they’re face to face.

CLIFF
We are better than him Ryan. Because this little bastard came into our house for no good reason and decided our things now belonged to him. It’s as simple as that. He made the first move. He’s lucky all I’m planning is to recover our stuff. Because between this and the way he talks to Hannah? I could do a lot fucken worse.
RYAN
Look Cliff, I’m sorry. I’ll back you up on a lot of shit. But I just can’t do this.

Ryan walks down the hallway and shuts the door behind him. He sits on the edge of his bed and places his hands over his mouth, sitting in deep thought.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Ryan and Dean stand behind the work van, loading up all the tools from the day into the back of it.

DEAN
Insurance?

RYAN
Not covered. Since they didn’t break in.

DEAN
Oh for fucks sake Ryan.

RYAN
Well it’s hardly my fault.

DEAN
Well who the fuck left the window open?

RYAN
It doesn’t matter who, its happened, our shit is gone and that’s that.

DEAN
The fucken deadbeats you hang out with I’m surprised it took this long for something to fuck up.

Ryan stops loading the tools and stares his father in the eye.

RYAN
What’s that supposed to mean?

DEAN
Don’t really think I left much room for interpretation.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Enough with the wordplay Dad, just say -

DEAN
You’re in a rut Ryan. A great big bloody rut. You’re 25, been hanging out with the same fucken losers since you were 10, and you’ve got absolutely no intention of doing anything more with your life.

RYAN
So what, working for you isn’t good enough?

Dean lets out a disbelieving laugh as he turns to pick up another tool, pausing for a breath before he turns and slowly walks towards Ryan.

DEAN
No! It’s not! You’re too fucken smart to be stuck around Thorpeton working for your old man as a builder. You need to get out there, do something with your life.

RYAN
You ever think maybe I’m content, happy with the way my life is?

DEAN
Except we both know you’re not Ryan. I can’t remember the last time I saw you strive for something, did something you actually enjoyed. You can’t just wait for an opportunity to pop up, you think the world owes you something? Sometimes life is about being a fucking man, getting out there, and getting it done.

RYAN
That’s your advice? Just be a man?

DEAN
That’s it. It’s time to nut up pal, think about what you really want in life, what you’re willing to do to get it.
Ryan pauses to consider what his father has told him, staring down at the ground, before reaching up and slamming the back door of the van shut.

INT. BOYS HOUSE - DAY

Cliff and Eddie sit at the dining table writing up a list of all the items they’ve had stolen. Ryan bursts through the front door, slams his keys on the table and looks at his friends with a gleam in his eye.

RYAN
I’m in.

EXT. CARPARK - NIGHT

Eddie sits in his car parked up in a dark corner of a carpark in the middle of town, music quietly humming from his speakers. He winds the window slightly down and lights up a cigarette, blowing large amounts of smoke into the fog outside.

He stares across the carpark at Nick’s Black Honda Civic, parked up by itself. Nick climbs out and walks across the road, heading into a pub opposite. Eddie takes one last long drag of his cigarette then compresses it into the cars ashtray. His phone suddenly lights up and starts ringing, he checks the screen to see that Cliff is ringing him.

EDDIE
Yea what’s up Cliff? -- Shit has he? So no one’s home? -- Fuck yes, I’ll find a way to make sure Nick doesn’t make it home for a while. -- Alright be careful.

Eddie hangs up the phone, and climbs out the car. He walks briskly over towards Nicks car, looking around the carpark shiftily. Once he reaches the car he ducks down beside the front right tire and starts to remove the valve cap. He grabs a small stone from the gutter beside it and places it inside the valve, hearing the hiss of air escaping as he replaces the cap.

EXT. NICKS HOUSE - NIGHT

Ryan catches up to Cliff in the driveway, hoods covering their heads and masks covering their faces. They walk onto the back doorstep, and Cliff backs up to the glass panel of the back door, raising his elbow.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
(whispering)
Whoa whoa whoa!

CLIFF
What?

RYAN
You wanna look around for a key or something before you just go smashing the place up?

CLIFF
You got one minute then I’m smashing it.

Ryan lifts up the corner of the doormat that Cliff is standing on, and finds a small key just under it. He holds it up in front of Cliff’s face and shakes his head.

CLIFF
Well, just like that ay?

Ryan pushes Cliff aside and inserts the key into the lock, which takes a bit of jamming and twisting. Finally the lock gives way, and he slowly pushes the door open, creaking ominously as he does so. They both slip inside, and pull the door shut gently behind them.

INT. NICKS HOUSE – NIGHT

Ryan and Cliff find themselves in the lounge, dirty clothes lying everywhere with beer bottles lining the coffee table. Ryan looks around the room, scanning for any familiar looking items. Cliff takes his mask off and throws it on top of the coffee table.

RYAN
Where do we start?

CLIFF
Through here.

Cliff motions at the first bedroom on the left and walks into there immediately. Before Ryan even gets the chance to follow him, he sees the light turn on in the room and hears Cliff’s voice from within.

CLIFF
(O.S.)
Well that was fucken easy.
Ryan rushes into the room behind him and shuts the light off.

RYAN
(whispering)
Are you fucking serious?

CLIFF
Settle down Mission Impossible.
Check it out.

Ryan shines the light from his phone around the room. Televisions, computers, and duffle bags filled with clothes and toiletries are scattered all around the room.

RYAN
Holy shit. It really was him.

CLIFF
Course it was.

Cliff bends down to inspect one of the laptops. Ryan kneels down beside him, also inspecting the items.

CLIFF
Well there’s no disputing it’s our shit.

RYAN
I wonder who helped him. There’s no way he moved all this by himself.

CLIFF
I doubt it.

Ryan’s phone suddenly starts to ring, giving him a huge fright. Cliff turns around and laughs at him. Ryan answers the phone.

RYAN
Hey Eddie, you mind not fucking calling while we’re sneaking around in someone else’s house?! -- Yeah real funny, me being paranoid. Ha ha ha. -- Look, unless Nick has left and is at the window right now, don’t call us again.

He hangs up the phone and turns to Cliff, who is staring out the window.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
You reckon anyone is home next door?

CLIFF
Nobody lives there, there was a "For Sale" sign out front.

RYAN
Wow, you actually observed something.

CLIFF
I know, pretty clever huh? Why don’t you bring the van around up the driveway anyway, back it right up to this window and we can load it straight up.

Cliff lobs the keys back to Ryan, who catches them and runs outside.

EXT. NICKS HOUSE - NIGHT

Ryan jogs back to the van and jumps in the drivers seat, removing his mask, firing up the ignition and slowly driving the van up to the driveway with no headlights. He pulls out slightly onto the road and reverses up the driveway, pulling the van to a stop just outside the window that Cliff has thrown open and is guiding him back from.

Ryan brings the van to a halt and kills the engine, running back to the window and opening up the rear door of the van. He turns straight away and loads up a laptop from Cliff’s arms, and they slowly pass all of their property from the bedroom into the van.

Ryan lobs the last duffle bag into the van and leans up to the window to inspect inside.

RYAN
(whispering)
That’s the last of it right?

CLIFF
(whispering)
The last of our shit, yea.

Cliff disappears further into the house. Ryan looks through the window with panic spreading across his face.

(Continued)
RYAN
Cliff! What the fuck are you doing?

Cliff pulls a drawer out of a cabinet and sends it skating across the bedroom floor before diving into it and scattering its contents around the room.

CLIFF
I’m looking for something expensive.

RYAN
What the fuck?! Why?!

Cliff doesn’t respond, and instead moves into the next room.

RYAN
Fuck!

Ryan runs around to the back and quietly opens the back door again, slipping inside once more.

EXT. CARPARK – NIGHT

Eddie is sitting in his car again, watching the entrance to the pub across the road. He cautiously scans the carpark for any other activity. Eddie sees Hannah; Cliff’s girlfriend, walk out of the bar, closely followed by Nick. Eddie appears confused for a moment, watching as the two share heated words, then Hannah storms off and Nick returns inside the bar. A little while later, Nick walks out and crosses the road, hopping in his car. Eddie pulls out his phone and checks the time.

EDDIE
(muttering)
C’mon, c’mon.

Nick climbs into his car and tries to reverse out of the carpark. Instantly he hears the flapping of the loose tire failing to rotate against the tarmac, and Nick hops out and paces while muttering curse words.

Eddie climbs out of his car and walks over in their direction.

EDDIE
You alright there bro?!

Nick looks up and sees Eddie walking towards him. He looks at him quickly then opens his boot, grabbing his jack out.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NICK
Yea I’m fine, just got a flat
that’s all.

Nick starts trying to align his jack under the car, Eddie
shakes his head and laughs.

EDDIE
Ah fuck that jack man, I’ve got my
trolley jack in the car, you want
me to give you a hand?

Nick stands up and shrugs, then nods slowly at Eddie.

NICK
Ah, yea sure man. That’d be great.

EDDIE
Awesome, I’ll just pull my car up.

INT. NICKS HOUSE - NIGHT
Ryan gently shuts the door behind him, looking around the
lounge and noticing Cliff has already scattered a few items
around the room.

RYAN
(hissing)
Cliff!

Cliff pops his head out from one of the bedrooms.

RYAN
What the hell are you looking for?

CLIFF
Some. Thing. Expensive.

Ryan strides into the room that Cliff is searching and spins
him around.

RYAN
Why? We got our stuff, now let’s
get out of here

CLIFF
Sure, we got our stuff. But I’m
looking for a little something
extra.

Ryan looks at Cliff, his eyes growing wider and wider,
breathing heavily.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Oh my god...

CLIFF
You didn’t think this was just about getting even did you?

RYAN
That’s exactly what I thought!

CLIFF
No Ryan, we deserve more.

RYAN
That’s not what you told me. You specifically said we were here to get our property back, that we weren’t stealing!

CLIFF
I know what I -

RYAN
No, listen to me for once! This is fucking mental! We’ve got our shit, now let’s move.

CLIFF
It’s not like that Ryan. This little fuckhead decided he had more of a right to our shit than we did. I’m simply returning the favour.

RYAN
Returning the favour? It’s theft!

CLIFF
Look at it how you like. I’m finding a consolation prize. Or interest if you prefer to look at it that way. Either help me out or get in the fucken van and wait for me to finish.

RYAN
Why does it mean so much to you that we steal something else?!

CLIFF
Because I lost my fucking job Ryan!

Ryan’s face drops and he loses his intensity.
RYAN
What?

CLIFF
I don’t have a job anymore.

RYAN
How the hell did you... that’s not important. So you’re just going to steal?

CLIFF
I have to. I need something to sell to Travis. Otherwise I can’t pay the rent. I can’t pay the power. I can’t even feed myself. I need this just to get by Ryan. And if you want a flatmate who’s reliable with the bills, you need this as well.

EXT. CARPARK - NIGHT

Eddie winds Nick’s car into the air while Nick waits by the tire ready to loosen the nuts. Eddie pauses and sits himself up to talk to Nick.

EDDIE
So what do you do man?

NICK
I go to school.

EDDIE
Oh shit you’re a young buck. What school?

NICK
Thorpeton College.

EDDIE
Oh no shit that’s where I went. Mr Lester still teach woodwork?

NICK
Yea he does.

EDDIE
Oh that’s cool man I used to love –

NICK
Look I don’t mean to be a dick but could we hurry this along? I really need to get home.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Eddie pauses and nods slowly.

EDDIE
Ah yea of course man, sorry if I’m a bit too chatty -

NICK
It’s fine.

EDDIE
Just helps me while I work you know? Having someone to chat to.

Eddie continues to wind up the car. As he nears the height they need he stops once again.

EDDIE
So you from round here originally?

INT. NICKS HOUSE - NIGHT

Ryan searches the lounge cupboards unenthusiastically, carefully pulling things out of drawers and placing them back in.

RYAN
Are you almost done?

CLIFF
(O.S.)
Almost!

Ryan grabs a photo frame off a bookshelf and looks at it. There’s a young boy; presumably Nick, in the photo with his mother and father and a small child. Ryan gently places the photo face down on the shelf.

Cliff returns into the lounge with an armload of goods. Ryan shakes his head at him.

CLIFF
What?

RYAN
Nothing. Can we just go now?

CLIFF
There’s one more room I want to check, then we can go. You take all this shit back to the van and pull it out onto the road again, be ready to go once I get out.

(CONTINUED)
Cliff passes the armload of goods over to Ryan, who quickly inspects what he’s being given.

RYAN
What have you even got?

CLIFF
All sorts of shit, a jewellry box, a watch, a pretty angry looking knife...

Ryan pulls the bowie knife from it’s sheath, twisting the blade in front of his face and reflecting the moonlight. He is almost caught in a trance as he admires the knife he’s holding.

CLIFF
Alright I’m serious Ryan, get that shit in the van.

Ryan snaps out of his daze and scoops up Cliff’s haul, running out the back door and to the drivers door of the van, lobbing his cargo into the back of the van.

EXT. NICKS HOUSE - NIGHT

Ryan slams the van into gear and slowly and quietly accelerates out of the driveway, pulling it onto the opposite side of the road into a position ready for a quick exit. He turns the ignition off again, and is temporarily blinded by headlights in the wing mirror. He shelters his face with his arm, then looks out the window to see the father’s Ford Falcon pulling back into the driveway.

RYAN
Oh fuck.

INT. NICKS HOUSE - NIGHT

Cliff walks up to the last room he hasn’t checked, the door shut. With no hesitation he strolls up and swings it wide open, heading straight for the nearest set of drawers and pulling them wide open.

He suddenly hears a click and is immediately illuminated in the room, turning around to see the light coming from a small bedside lamp. In the bed beside it lies a nine year old boy, staring at Cliff with a look of confusion but not fear.
Cliff stares back at him and they maintain eye contact for a while, neither of them saying a word. Cliff breathes heavily, eyes fixed upon the child, who stares back with a strange calmness about him.

After a while, Cliff turns and shuts the drawer he had just opened. He walks towards the door, glancing back to find the kids eyes tracking him towards the exit. As Cliff passes through the doorway and slowly pulls the door shut behind him, the kid calmly reaches out and shuts off the bedside light and lays down to rest.

Cliff suddenly hears the noise of the front door being unlocked. In full view of the door, Cliff turns around in shock, then dives to hide behind the nearest door. Nick's father PETE DAVIS enters, a plump man sporting a thick brown moustache. Pete stumbles through the door as he opens it, almost collapsing to the floor. He chuckles to himself, starting to hum "Bank Robber" by The Clash, drunkenly slurring a few of the words.

He walks into the kitchen and grabs a beer from the fridge, then into the lounge and plants himself down on one of the couches in front of the table. As he does so Cliff slowly manouevres his way back into the bedroom where their property had been, slowly and carefully pulling the door shut behind him. As the door closes, Pete notices, looking up when he hears the slight creak the door makes. Cliff stands on the other side of the door, breathing slowly and quietly, pressing his ear against the door to listen for any movement.

As Pete perks up with intrigue at the movement of the door, he notices the Scream mask out of the corner of his eye, sitting on the table in front of him. He picks it up and looks at it in confusion for a moment. He then looks around the lounge and notices the few things scattered around the room. He tries to piece together what's going on, before shrugging and passing it all off. He picks up one of the blankets off the ground and throws it around himself, stretching himself out across the couch.

Cliff hears all the movement stop, then slowly creeps over to the window where they had loaded their cargo, and slinks out and down to the ground, breaking into a brisk jog down the driveway.
EXT. NICKS HOUSE - NIGHT

Ryan sits impatiently in the van, looking back constantly to check if Cliff has surfaced yet. He glances at his phone, glances at the rear vision mirror, glances at his phone, glances at the rear vision mirror.

He hears the pounding of footsteps, followed by the sharp noise of the passenger door being violently pulled open, Cliff throwing himself into the seat as he does so, empty-handed.

   RYAN
   Did he see you?

   CLIFF
   No. Let’s get out of here.

   RYAN
   Are you absolutely –

   CLIFF
   I said let’s fucking go Ryan!

Ryan turns the ignition and the van roars to life immediately. He slams it into gear and slowly pulls out into the street, picking up his pace once he’s cleared a couple of houses.

EXT. CARPARK - NIGHT

Eddie winds the jack down, returning the Civic to its position on the ground.

   EDDIE
   There we go man, good as new.

Nick kicks the tire with his foot and notes that it’s fully inflated.

   NICK
   So what do you think happened to the other one?

   EDDIE
   Just a stone or something flinged up and got lodged, happens all the time man.

Nick nods at Eddie, a small gesture of appreciation.

(CONTINUED)
NICK
Well ah, thanks, I guess I better get home, it’s getting late.

EDDIE
Hey not a problem man. Just don’t go hitting no potholes or anything, would hate for you to burst another tire before you can replace that spare!

NICK
Yea I think it’ll be a slow ride back. See ya round.

Nick hops back into his car and Eddie begins to walk back to his car on the dark side of the carpark. He reaches it and sits down inside, lighting up another cigarette.

He watches Nick’s car pull out of the carpark, then pulls out his phone and punches in a contact.

EDDIE
Yea Cliff it’s me -- He’s just left now.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The van barrels down the road, cargo slightly shifting around in the back. Cliff pulls the phone away from his face for a second to address Ryan.

CLIFF
Hey man take it easy, don’t want everything sliding around too much.

RYAN
Yea my bad.

Cliff returns the phone to his ear.

CLIFF
So he’s on his way home? -- That’s perfect, we’ve just left about five minutes ago -- Yea we got it all back, along with a little something extra -- Any hiccups?

Cliff hesitates, glancing over at Ryan to see if he says anything.

(CONTINUED)
CLIFF
Had a minor dilemma with the old man. He didn’t see us though. We were just in and out really. — — Yea I’m positive — — Alright we’ll catch you at home — — I know I’m stoked too brother, see ya soon.

Cliff hangs up the phone and puts it in his pocket. He looks over to see Ryan smiling and starting to laugh to himself.

CLIFF
What’s so funny?

RYAN
"Just in and out really".

CLIFF
What about it?

RYAN
Just in and out my arse. You had a lot of fucking around amongst that.

CLIFF
Well we got some good shit didn’t we?

RYAN
That we did.

CLIFF
You’re not pissed off about it are you?

Ryan tosses his head around, contemplating the question.

RYAN
To be honest, not now. I mean, we did it, we got away clean. Well, relatively clean.

CLIFF
That we did.

RYAN
And he definitely didn’t see you?

CLIFF
No he didn’t.
RYAN
I think it’s just starting to sink in. We fucken did it man!

CLIFF
Alright eyes on the road there champ.

RYAN
How are you not more pumped right now? This whole thing was your idea.

CLIFF
I’m just being modest that’s all.

RYAN
I’ve known you a long time Cliff. Modesty is not one of your strong suits.

CLIFF
Well maybe I’m working on it.

RYAN
Whatever you say. I’m just feeling we should celebrate that’s all.

CLIFF
Someone’s had a change of heart.

RYAN
Well it’s exciting you know?

CLIFF
Yea, I know.

RYAN
And for the whole thing to go off with no real complications. That’s pretty awesome.

Cliff looks out the window into the darkness, thinking about the small boy who had seen his face.

CLIFF
Yea. No complications at all.
EXT. CARPARK - NIGHT

Eddie puts his phone in his pocket and winds down his window slightly again, taking a long drag of his cigarette, then closes his eyes and rests his head back.

He is jolted to attention by a sharp tapping on his window. His eyes snap open, he drops his cigarette and burns his thigh. He frantically slaps his leg to put it out, then looks to his right and sees a stranger standing at the window. He winds his window down cautiously.

EDDIE
Are you alright there man?

The stranger kneels down to Eddie’s eye level and sneers at him viciously.

STRANGER
I’m alright pal. I just want to know why the fuck you let that boys tire down.
Results from Feedback

Aside from a couple of small adjustments (already adjusted in the story outlines provided) feedback regarding the nature of the format itself is largely positive, as the story appears to make sense regardless of the order it’s read in. All respondents expressed their view that they felt their order was an extremely strong order for it to have played out in, with certain questions and answers revealing themselves at times that felt appropriate for dramatic tension in those particular orders. The main objective behind getting the feedback in different orders was to make sure that the story made sense in any order and still played out in a satisfactory manner as far as being an exciting narrative goes, so in this aspect the story outline for Kleptoes could be considered a success.

As far as actual narrative goes, feedback was still very positive, with a lot of interest expressed in the story and speculation as to what happens in the finale. (The outline for the finale has been passed on to the respondents). It was extremely interesting to see how the different predictions for the finale developed over time from each respondent based on the order they read it in, as they were provided with more information at a different rate. It was also particularly interesting to see how these predictions panned out against the actual end result, with elements of the predictions being correct, but none of them getting it undisputedly correct.

As far as the season itself went, there were a few struggles with being limited with the amount of story that can be told, with the entire season taking place within a couple of weeks, and each character only actually having three episodes combined of narrative development, between the pilot, their individual episode and the finale. This meant that character development was often happening very quickly; with huge changes within individual episodes, which could sometimes feel unnatural. It could actually have been more beneficial; albeit a lot more work, to have an extra six episodes, with five more individual character episodes after the current finale, followed by a true finale, resulting in a thirteen episode long season. This would mean greater
character development, as there is a bit more screen time to further these changes, as well as potentially crafting a satisfying conclusion that’s not ending on a cliffhanger, as the current one sets itself up to rely on at least another season to wrap up the story.

The Digital Link

While it’s all well and good to say that the format would be a success because it can be read in any order and make sense, it still remains to be seen whether social media is a strong enough platform for television viewers in New Zealand for the “Audience Order” concept to be adopted. For this concept to truly work, the social media angle needs to be played up heavily, with a large social media campaign almost essential to the format’s success in the weeks leading up to the release of such a series. As covered in the discussion of *Hope and Wire*, social networking if used correctly could provide a strong access point for new viewers to hear about the show, and subsequently get active in the voting process that dictates the order of the episodes.

None of this touches upon another way this format can be used in an interesting manner, if a show such as this was ever picked up for digital distribution. Should New Zealand networks ever decide that a digital streaming first approach is the way to go for any future releases, this format actually represents a very versatile narrative structure to fit that bill, where viewers could choose to watch the episodes in any order as they please. With the normal social media based concept, even should they vote it’s essentially a popularity concept for which episode is played next, meaning a large number of audience members could be unsatisfied with the order. With a fully digital distribution of the show, this would eliminate that frustration with voting systems entirely, placing the power completely into the viewers’ hands, letting them experience the show for the first time in a completely different way than their friends or family may have.
The question remains; how does this whole development of Kleptoes reshape the variables of the television series as a text? Does this shake up the idea that the variables of a text are governed by the medium? In brief, yes it does. The very idea that texts had to adhere to the variable characteristics of their medium was dismantled almost immediately, just by seeing in the initial analysis of these variables how video games could fall into so many of them. But to go further, the development of Kleptoes showed that a television series isn’t necessarily held back by the restrictions of the text variables like it used to be.

The Dynamics of the text was one of the main variables to receive a shake up from the concept of the program, with the very nature of the re-ordering of the episode challenging the core concepts of traditional television and reworking the structure audiences are accustomed to. With the aim to make Kleptoes a little different with its structure, it actually strayed away from being a static text with the idea that the episodes could be reordered, watched in any order by the reader while still making sense. The way the story was conveyed to the reader or the ‘scriptons’, was no longer fixed and actually welcomed a rearrangement, prompting an immediate and clear difference to traditional television that would progress from ‘Episode 1’ to ‘Episode 2’ and ‘3’ and so on. Already, the use of the Internet to promote a change of structure to the dramatic television series was demonstrating changes in to how the television series as a text was initially viewed.

Determinability was another one of these variables that faced a change from expectations of what a television series would be classified as. Normal television series would be classified as determinate, as the events that transpire can only happen in a certain order, and audiences are presented with the events in the same order as always intended by the writer. With Kleptoes, the key concept is that the episodes can be in any order and make sense. Depending on the order these episodes are in, things can play out very differently, with various questions raised and answered in completely different ways depending on the order they are consumed in. While the overall story still flows towards the same conclusion but on a different path, the way things
are hidden from or revealed to the viewer means that different meaning can be gathered from the episodes depending on the order. After watching one episode, a character might be completely untrustworthy to the audience, only to be revealed otherwise later down the track. Conversely; in a different order, we might know one character to be trustworthy from the start, and see past the lies that other characters may tell of them in future episodes. By having character motivations and important story details twisted or flipped around so much, new episodes have entirely different meanings because of a different schedule of episodes, making the text seem quite indeterminate compared to what audiences are used to from a television series.

Aside from the social media angle, the capacities of the Internet provide a lot of potential for reworking the television series framework in its Access. While the argument could be made that television could have been called random access for quite some time, with scene and episode selection functions on a DVD player or accessing specific episodes on a DVR, the new media landscape has streamlined this process even further. With the rise of digital streaming platforms such as Netflix or Lightbox, viewers can access whichever episodes they want when they open up their browser. Normal broadcast television remains a form of controlled access, as the library of episodes aren’t able to be selected from and are restricted by the broadcaster. If Kleptoes were to air on a normal television channel, this would be no exception, and despite the concept of the show viewers would only be able to access episodes in the order the broadcaster determines. However, should the program ever open up to digital streaming platforms, random access is a very real future, as viewers could decide the order they personally want to view episodes in. While any program can be viewed like this on a digital platform, many of them would not make sense to be viewed in any order if you hadn’t seen the show previously. Kleptoes aims to be the difference in this scenario, providing a chain of episodes that can be rearranged to audience preference, and truly accessed in any order for the new audience participant.
Looking at *User Function* from an interpretive standpoint, it’s clearly necessary to relate it back to the *Determinability* angle, and address the fact that different meanings can be drawn from the episodes depending on the order they are viewed in. If the show was ever distributed in a manner where audiences could personally choose the order they watch the episodes in, they would inevitably draw different conclusions about characters and predictions for future events than other viewers. This was made extremely clear with the feedback from the two different orders sampled from the story outlines, with each respondent generating extremely different predictions for where things would end up, as well as understanding character motivations more.

This picking and choosing also opens up a configurative function for audience members, which is not usually found within a regular television series. Whether it’s voting for the next episode via social media, or choosing the order on their own when watching it online, *Kleptoes* offers a configurative experience. By participating in either of these methods, audiences are actually reshaping how an entire story in a television series takes place, even without changing or influencing the actual events themselves. Should a television series ever go the route of choosing outcomes as well (in a choose-your-own-adventure type series) the television series could also expand into a personal perspective, granting the audience the means to actually influence story details as they happen. As it stands, the audience is still having a large role in impacting how things play out, without the serious resource costs that come from filming a large-scale decision-making plot.

Already, from looking at the way *Dynamics, Determinability, Access* and *User Function* can be altered by integrating social media into the television series, it is clear that the series as a text could be a vastly different phenomenon from the ones many grew up with. Although largely untapped in its current state, social media and creative digital streaming practices could play a large role in reworking the current perspective on the television series as a text. With these variables able to be easily reworked and incorporated into a dramatic serialized drama, there is no reason why the rest of the key variables could not also be reshaped, changing the way television works in general.
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