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**Exploring how Constraints Affect
the Creative Process and Output
of Modern Video Media**

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
**Master of Arts at
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by
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Abstract

Web series are a fairly new media form, only really emerging within the past 10 years. Dan Williams (2012) describes web series as a form of media that allows independent content creators that are excluded from traditional media forms a voice within the realm of media. Web series developed rapidly from home movies to full scale productions, exhibiting how low budget productions can still be of a high quality. This thesis explores what distinguishes web series from other media forms. The theoretical background surrounding web series provide interesting ideas that can be used to understand the medium further. The accessible nature of web series provides a context from which to understand the medium further.

This research explores real life constraints and how they effect the creative process and output of modern video media, focusing on web series. This project employs a practice-based approach, involving creating an independent web series as a way to discover first hand what constraints were faced, and how they were dealt with. The intent of this study is not to find and define the best way of dealing with certain constraints but rather to explore potential ways to manage obstacles that inevitably arise within a production. Utilizing interview methodologies and autoethnography, with a practice-based approach, this research allowed for a deeper understanding to be gained of the process of creating web series.

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Preface

This research includes practical exploration of the process of making a web series. My role in the process was the director, writer, editor, and producer. This web series can be found on a USB drive at the back of the thesis and includes:

Community Theatre TV – Pack in (Garson, 2017)

Community Theatre TV – Rehearsal (Garson, 2017)

Community Theatre TV – Advertising (Garson, 2017)

Community Theatre TV – Cast Bonding (Garson, 2017)

Community Theatre TV – Opening and Pack out (Garson, 2017)

These five episodes are essential to this research, and it is recommended that they are viewed.

If there are any difficulties opening the web series, an online version may be found at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCewEE_ZyjjomYufpuOnLkkg or by searching ‘Community Theatre TV episode one: Pack In’ on YouTube.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis contributes to the growing body of scholarship that addresses how real life constraints effect the creative process and creative output of modern video media, in particular, the creation of a web series. Web series offer a way for individuals to create and share their own content that was unavailable until recent years. Initially, only aspiring or professional filmmakers created publically shareable content, however now anyone who has access to a video recording device and some kind of editing software can create a diverse range of digital video projects. Williams describes web series as having “given voices to those left out of traditional entertainment and provided new opportunities for independent artists” (Williams, 2012, p. 12). Recently, platforms like YouTube and Vimeo have gained attention as sites for anyone who has tried their hand at making digital content and allows them to share it publically.

My interest in performance and the process of filmmaking from a young age inspired me to look in depth at the process of creating web series and the history that lead to web series becoming a popular form of expression and entertainment. This research is important as it can provide insight into the challenges inexperienced or upcoming filmmakers face when creating their own content. Web series are a relatively new format that some content creators see as a way to hone their skills while creating a name for themselves, and exploring commonly experienced constraints and how they can be resolved could help filmmakers be more prepared before beginning their projects, and avoid constraints before they arise.

The scope of this research is two fold:

1. To identify constraints web series makers commonly encounter and how to deal with them,
2. To identify if there is a style of structure and/or content specific to web series.

I used a practice-based approach, which enabled me to experience the filmmaking process and constraints first hand, and to discover how constraints can affect a project. Autoethnography was utilized to examine and document the creative process of making my own web series. In addition, I interviewed professional and

amateur filmmakers with experience in web series creation to gain insights from a wider group.

To develop my understanding and document the practice of creating web series, I wrote, produced, directed, and edited my own web series entitled *Community Theatre TV (CTTV)*. Throughout this process I documented my findings based on what constraints I faced and how I dealt with them, and then looked to see how these restrictions impacted my web series overall. This enabled me to explore how these constraints effected pre-production, production, and post-production, and to discover some solutions that helped deal with unexpected issues. This approach was advantageous both to my own personal learning as well as informing my research. Along with creating *CTTV*, I examined four other web series to gather data about their production values, and commonly used codes and conventions. This enabled me to use autoethnography to gain a better understanding of how current creators structure their series.

This kind of research contributes to the broader screen and media studies field, and as web series is a relatively new subject within academia and I believe this research contributes some interesting insights.

Chapter one looks at the background theory, and some aspects that contribute towards the recent advancement of web series, such as changes in television viewing, online platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo, how participatory culture has encouraged people to create their own work, and how serialization on screen has developed over time. It also discusses methodology and the use of interviews.

Chapter two presents four case studies of web series to see what distinguishes them from other media forms. I have also comprised a list of codes and conventions in order to better understand what has been commonly used throughout these four web series.

Chapter three explores the interviews I conducted with four filmmakers, two who have been working in the film industry in a professional capacity, and two who had limited experience before working on *CTTV*.

Chapter four looks at the process of creating *CTTV*. It examines pre-production, production, and post-production, along with discussing what constraints were

experienced throughout the process, and how they were resolved. An autoethnographic approach was used to discuss aspects throughout this chapter, creating a change of tone within the chapter.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What constraints do web series creators face, and how do they affect the creative process and output?
- Is there a style of content and/or structure specific to the web series?

CHAPTER 1: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Web series as a format for online video content is a relatively recent phenomenon, and as such there is limited research on the topic. Since technology has become more accessible and affordable, many more people have decided to become media creators as well as media consumers, however, there are many other elements that need to be taken into consideration when discussing why web series are becoming popular among consumers and creators at this time. Platforms like Vimeo (2004) and YouTube (2005) were created in the mid 2000s, and slowly attracted people with their innovative ideas and ways of sharing original videos. Instead of having to schedule time at a television set, making sure to catch their favourite programme, or ensuring that recording technology is set up to record every episode, many consumers are now moving towards the internet as their preferred way for content consumption. There are still numerous people who prefer a more traditional way of consuming content, people who feel as though the shift toward watching content on the internet has been forced upon them, or who do not have computers or broadband, or who prefer not to learn how to use computer technology. Corporate companies still heavily control a lot of online content, and not everyone can afford to access the internet and online platforms like Netflix and Lightbox. A lot of corporate produced content can only be (legally) accessed through paid subscriptions, and the alternative of illegally downloading programmes and movies involves copyright infringements that could lead to fines (in New Zealand fines are anywhere from \$200 to \$150,000, and possibly jail time of up to 5 years (Copyright Council of New Zealand, 2006)). Platforms like YouTube allow users to access content for free, and some mainstream television shows such as *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* (2014) and *The Daily Show* (1996), make segments of their shows available freely on YouTube. Companies such as TVNZ are currently putting more money into web series because they want to compete with Netflix, “Cause they are damn aware that people are changing their viewing habits” (Skilton, personal communication, July 7, 2016). Distributing content on the web is a way for people to engage with media at a time and place that suits them. “Web distribution allows viewing on a computer rather than on a television. Thus it allows viewing by people unavailable when programming is aired as well as by people without ready access to a television set” (Waldfoegel, 2009, p. 161).

The internet has a range of platforms to watch programmes that are screened to free television, along with places to view paid television, like the programmes that are screened on channels like SoHo and MTV. As more people are viewing content online, this is where the new medium of web series comes in. Web series need not adhere to the rules of film and television, allowing creators to be as experimental as they like with what they create, without having to worry about strict television censorship. Emmett Skilton, a New Zealand web series creator, stated, “I can say ‘fuck’ all I want, I can show sex all I want, all that kind of stuff. As long as it tells the story, I can do what I want, as soon as you go through a television censorship operation then, okay, you’re only allowed three ‘fucks,’ four ‘fucks,’ five ‘fucks,’ before 9:00pm” (Skilton, personal communication, July 7, 2016). As web series are not screened to a large mainstream audience, this lack of rules caters to the kind of audience who are after non-mainstream content. For the purposes of this study, I have classified non-mainstream content as media not screened on television to the masses, such as web series and other user-generated content. As there are with any creative endeavors, there are still constraints and barriers in the process of making web series, which may echo those of traditional filmmaking or may be constraints unique to web series.

Serialization of web series is one of the reasons they have built in popularity. People enjoy watching serialized programmes because they give them characters and narratives they can invest themselves in. They get to follow characters through their journeys over a long period of time. There are both advantages and disadvantages to serializing programmes. Advantages include allowing for audience feedback to be incorporated in future storylines, and allowing creators to explore multiple narratives within the same story. Negative aspects include higher risks of having continuity errors, and over time writers can forget about smaller pieces of information that happened in previous episodes when they are writing later seasons. Another element aiding the popularity of web series is the shortening of audiences’ attention spans. Years ago plays, films, and books could be hours long. Shakespearean plays would span from 2.5 hours to 4 hours long back when Hamlet was first performed between 1601-1602 (British Library, n.d). Shakespearean shows often were not fast paced in order to tell their story thoroughly, now, if someone put on a performance, film, or television show that long, it would not get the same audience response. A lot of people feel they do not

have time to watch a show longer than 90 minutes, the standard time for feature length films. Peggy Phelan stated, “many powerful men, had a short attention span. Like the ‘target audience’ for most contemporary Hollywood films... preferred fast action, elaborate scenery, and good music with a simple plot” (Phelan, 1992, p. 43)

1.1 THEORY

1.1.1 HOW PEOPLE WATCH TV

The internet is a well developed and integral aspect of today's society, and it has many capabilities that are rendering other technologies redundant. Audiences were first able to watch media content in the 1890s when the first cinemas opened, with what is now known as the golden age of cinema beginning in 1905 (Merritt, 2004). Audiences were heavily restricted to when they could watch a film based on when it was showing, and how many seats the cinema had. Onward from 1910, billions of cinema tickets were sold annually, and consumers who did not regularly visit the cinema became a minority (Bakker, 2003). If they wanted to watch a film, not only did they have to be able to afford it, they had to arrange their schedules around the screening times. As more cinemas opened people had more choice of when they could go watch a film. Once film viewing became a popular leisure activity, televisions were created, allowing people to watch content in their own homes.

From the late 1970s, viewers started recording television shows on VHS tape, enabling them to watch shows when they wanted too, although you could only record one programme at a time. Since then televisions have advanced technologically, and now smart televisions are available with access to YouTube and Netflix. As a result of these kinds of platforms, the way people watch television changed. No longer do they have to wait for scheduled programming to come on at a certain time, as they can watch almost anything they want, when they want if they have access to these platforms. In May 2006, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) began offering complete episodes of its popular shows online for free (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012). American Cybercast's former cable television executive Sheri Herman stated, “there's a shift going on: eyeballs that once were in front of the TV are now in front of the PC” (Christian, 2012, p.

340). Once stations like ABC started putting content online for free many other big stations quickly followed in ABC's progressive steps, releasing their own television shows on their own websites, although ABC still remained the leader (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012).

Netflix became a household name in the late 1990s when it launched its rental service, mailing DVDs to customers' doorsteps (Proulx & Shepatin, 2012), but it is now widely known for its paid online streaming channel. As of the first quarter of 2017 Netflix has a worldwide base of 98.75 million subscribers (Statista, 2017). Netflix charges a monthly fee for customers to watch a range of television shows and movies on multiple devices such as a television, laptop, smart phone, or tablet (Netflix, 2016). In New Zealand, Netflix currently has 450 television shows and 1563 movies that their customers can watch (Finder.com Staff, 2016). Different licensing agreements means not every country can access the same content, although your subscription means you can watch Netflix where ever you are, that does not mean you will be able to watch the same content you can watch at home. American websites like ABC.com, Fox.com, and New Zealand sites like TV3.co.nz, and TVNZondemand.co.nz, also give users access to free programmes and movies that broadcast on their stations for a limited time.

Television viewing has largely shifted from a passive audience to an active viewership, though there are arguments to support both sides of this debate. An active audience is where the audience does not simply accept every message the media broadcasts. They question what is being said, and interpret the message based on their own life experiences, background, and education. A passive audience does not seem to question what messages the media is sending, and accepts them as they are presented. Staiger states watching TV is not a passive but a very active event (Staiger, 2005). It is an active event in the sense that after watching some form of media, there is almost always some sort of discussion, or comment about what has happened within the film or television show (Hall, 1986, p. vii). In contrast, depending on what situation the viewer is in, Gorton suggests if a viewer is watching television to pass time this signifies the activity is passive (Gorton, 2009). When thinking about if audiences are passive or active, there is a framework of encoding and decoding a text that can be used, in which there are three types of decoding – preferred, negotiated, and oppositional (Staiger, 2005). Scholars have criticized this framework for a number of reasons, an example

being that “television and other texts do not necessarily reproduce dominant ideology in any coherent sense, so determining a preferred meaning is difficult” and “a tendency exists to assume classes are unitary and unaffected by other identities and pleasures, making difficult the slotting of actual readings into one of the three categories” (Staiger, 2005, p. 83). Although there are arguments for and against this particular framework, it is useful to think about as it sets a foundation on which audiences can be viewed.

The uses and gratifications theory can be used when looking at how and why some audiences are active, as it “conceptualizes media use as a means to satisfy human needs” (Rui & Stefanone, 2016, p. 401). The early use of the uses and gratifications theory has been criticized by many academics, which seemed to focus on the fact that “it relied heavily on self-reports” and it “was too uncritical of the possible dysfunction both for self and society of certain kinds of audience satisfaction” (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 5). Although this may be the case, uses and gratifications theory can be useful when looking at how and why audiences react to media content the way they do. Another criticism held against this theory is “that it implies that the media is capable of knowing what audiences want and is therefore able to give it to them” (Gorton, 2009, p. 17). This is not the case as audience desires can be unpredictable. There are many different ways in which audiences can be active and passive. When an audience member is active, not only are they questioning what is being presented to them, but they are also having physical and emotional responses to what they are viewing. Active audiences strive to look between the lines of what is being said, and try to find the deeper meaning that is not being explicitly stated. Something that is assumed in uses and gratifications theory is “audiences are aware of their needs and these needs motivate media choices for need gratification” (Rui & Stefanone, 2016, p. 402). This is why not all audiences are active, some simply do not feel the need to question what is being presented to them. They are happy accepting what they are being told, and when audiences “select certain media, or certain types of content, in their roles as citizens, or consumers, or church members, we gain insight into the relationship between the attributes of the media (real or perceived) and the social and psychological functions which they serve” (Katz, Haas, & Gurevitch, 1973, p. 166). Audience engagement is a complex subject and the uses and gratifications theory has limitations, being just one approach to reception studies.

1.1.2 YOUTUBE, VIMEO, AND PARTICIPATORY CULTURE

Since the boom in access to technology, the internet has become known as a place to find any kind of content imaginable. This is partly because YouTube is a platform which allows users to post their creative content for free for the world to see. YouTube was founded in 2005 by three former PayPal employees, and was “one of a number of competing services aiming to remove the technical barriers to the widespread sharing of video online” (Burgess & Green, 2013, p. 1). People were very keen on becoming part of the YouTube community, and by 2008 YouTube had more than 85 million videos readily available to consumers. In 2005 YouTube added more features, which meant users could more easily share their videos with one another and communicate within the website itself. YouTube encouraged viral spreading of videos by adding four essential features:

1. Related video recommendations,
2. one-click emailing to share videos with friends,
3. social networking and user interaction tools (e.g. video comments),
4. and an external video player (Gannes, 2006).

In part due to YouTube quickly adapting to what its users wanted, this platform has stayed at the top of the market with more and more users visiting the site each year. As it relies completely on individuals creating and posting content to their site, YouTube is built on participatory culture (see below) (Burgess & Green, 2013), with many consumers using the site to create a fan base for their work. To support the platform, YouTube began to add advertisements to their videos, eventually inviting consumers to “monetize” their work with commercials before and during playback. This may create an incentive for creators to share their work on YouTube (though payment is very low per view or click).

Vimeo’s platform also allows users to share content, however it has a different target audience, catering to professional or emerging filmmakers as a place where they can showcase their work and potentially gain higher quality feedback than on YouTube. Vimeo also has a much smaller, more mature community. While YouTube has over 1 billion users today, Vimeo has approximately 170 million

viewers, with 42 million residing in the United States (Lahaie, 2016). Vimeo has become well known within the filmmaking community as a place to find content produced to a higher quality than most YouTube videos. Vimeo is frequently used as a primary host for web series, and for professionals to showcase their film work. Rather than monetizing videos, Vimeo is advertisement free, covering their costs through paid memberships that allow users to upload more content.

Participatory culture is one of the reasons platforms like YouTube and Vimeo have become successful, by providing a platform for people to share their content with the world. Participatory culture can be defined in many ways, but Harry Jenkins and Ravi Purushotma define it as having “relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing creations with others...members who believe that their contributions matter, members who feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least, they care what other people think about what they have created)” (Jenkins & Purushotma, 2009, pp. 5-6). When people contribute to social media they generally desire feedback or attention from their ‘friends’, ‘fans’, ‘followers’ or from other users. Technological progress has helped to expand the limits of participatory culture, resulting in many more people taking up filmmaking practices. This increased accessibility to technology and viewing of media content has allowed people to try out new creative ideas, and as new technology has become available it opened up new opportunities for consumers and potential creators. Broadcast quality cameras are now affordable for more people, as are computers with editing functionality. Web series have also become a way for upcoming filmmakers to create a voice for themselves, and join the participatory world. “Web Series, as a medium of cultural production, is also bound up in broader concerns about participatory culture, emerging forms of story-telling, self-representation, digital disruption and the culture industry” (Keltie, 2017, p. 3).

The term ‘Culture Industry’ was coined by critical theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who suggest popular culture is similar to a company that only produces standard, normalized cultural goods, such as film and radio shows, used to manipulate society into passiveness by reorganizing and rationalizing the objective mind (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002). With web series and other forms of participatory culture deviating from the culture industry norms, they challenge

the culture industry and the dominance it has over society, allowing creators to venture down new avenues without the same restrictions imposed by television stations. “Web series in particular, can be spaces for new voices, inhabited by a diverse range of stories and content. These practices have the potential to allow for increased diversity of content to be both produced and consumed” (Keltie, 2017, p. 4). This suggests participatory culture is a community where creativity and new ideas are encouraged and appreciated no matter how active individuals are within it. However, the increase in participatory culture’s popularity has also opened the door for inexperienced creators to post low quality content. This means consumers have to filter through all kinds of content to find the quality they are looking for. Although participatory culture can be about people posting content they think is missing from the media, not everyone who participates is interested in becoming a professional media maker; often people do it purely for fun. Participatory culture has been around for a long time, starting with fandoms – creating fan fiction, fan made parody videos, and fan artwork, but the internet has allowed fans to reach out to wider communities, and interact and engage with each others fan theories, videos, and other creative content. When it comes to being part of participatory culture, it is not always by posting your own created content. “Not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued” (Jenkins & Purushotma, 2009, p. 6). Members must feel as though they are part of a community of peers who interact and appreciate the content being presented to them. There are many different forms of activity within participatory culture, including “blogging, gaming, social media, commenting on forums, contributing to wikis, uploading videos to YouTube, political action and so on” (Keltie, 2017, p. 35), allowing members to contribute in whichever way they choose, or to consume without producing or responding to work.

1.1.3 SERIALIZATION ON SCREEN

A “serial” is a a form of media published at regular intervals (Allen & Berg, 2014), such as a magazine, radio or television show, and the practice of serialization dates back to the Victorian era, when in the 1830s serial culture began to rapidly expand (Allen & Berg, 2014). Serialization within novels and other print media developed quickly, with the New York Mirror claiming in 1849, "this is the golden age of periodicals" (as cited in Allen and Berg, 2014, p. 16) in

response to how popular serialized stories were with the public. In the late nineteenth century, weekly magazines published detective stories such as *Nick Carter*. *Nick Carter* became such a popular hero that “in 1891 his exploits were serialized in the Nick Carter Detective Library, which later appeared simply as the Nick Carter Weekly” (Abel, 2017, p. 81). Serials have been popular for a long time, moving from printed serials to serials on screen. The idea of being able to follow a character’s growth and development throughout a series, or just simply not having to spend an excessive amount of time viewing or reading, appeals to audiences as they can form attachments to characters. Since broadcasting began, daytime soap operas have “frequently served as shorthand for the kind of moving image narrative that continues from episode to episode, resisting resolution and instead telling the tale of an ‘indefinitely expandable middle’” (Levine, 2017, p. 105). By the 1960s, serials were valued enough that there were efforts to bring them to primetime television in that decade and the next (Levine, 2017). Since on-screen serials are now strongly integrated within our society, serials primarily on the internet have become more popular as they do not require a large amount of time to engage with. Consumers wishing to actively participate in creating web series reinforces the idea that serials are as popular now as they were when they were first created in written form. Levine argues that in many programmes such as *The Good Wife* (King & King, 2009) and *Breaking Bad* (Gilligan, 2008), the influences of the soap opera serial are visible throughout their storytelling methods, and though they are different to the soap opera in “industry, audience, and critical commentary, as well as, at times, in their narrative form, [this] does not mean they are unrelated to their daytime foremothers” (Levine, 2017, p. 108). The soap opera form has been modernized in such a way that they are able to tell more in-depth and interesting stories at a primetime spot, and are not as ‘shallow’ as traditional soap operas such as *The Days of our Lives* (Phillips, Chase, Corday, 1965).

1.2 METHODOLOGY

This study combines practice-based research with the methods of interviews and autoethnography. There is still much debate around how to define practice-based research, and how it can be used. For the purposes of this research, I am using Linda Candy’s definition of practice-based research as “an original investigation

undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice” (Candy, 2006, p. 3). This mix of practice-based research and interviews allows for a practical, real life experience to combine with the knowledge of industry professionals who know the ins and outs of the creative process of making a web series. There is little written specifically to prepare filmmakers to make web series, so many of the problems I encountered throughout production of my web series required me to test new solutions. The effectiveness of these solutions were measured both by feedback from other crew members about their experiences on set, and by judging the finished product.

1.2.1 PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH

The primary objective of my practice-based research is to conduct an investigation with the goal of acquiring new knowledge about the impact of real life constraints on a smaller scale production. Having previous experience on both short and feature film sets, I am aware of some of the constraints that can affect them, including budget, available time, attracting collaborators to the project, marketing and distribution. One difference is how on larger scale productions actor and crew availability is less of a concern as there are many people wanting experience, exposure, to make contacts, or build their resume, so it is relatively easy to find people willing to make the time to be part of a larger production, especially if they have a budget to cover wages. This is different to the experience of creating my own web series as I was not paying anyone, and therefore had to work around their paid employment.

Some objections to the use of practice-based research include the claim that the term ‘practice-based’ means that any activity could be considered research, such as art making. Scrivener argues art making “is undertaken in order to create apprehensions (i.e., that is objects that must be grasped by the senses and the intellect) which, when grasped, offer ways of seeing the past, present and future, rather than knowledge of the way things were or are” (Scrivener, 2002, p. 12). The important difference between this art making as pure practice that Scrivener is talking about and practice-based research is that practice-based research seeks to add to our collective accumulation of knowledge in a more general sense rather than an artist conducting ‘research’ to reach a particular goal (Scrivener, 2002). Within practice-based research there are numerous ways to show the outcomes of

research. As it is not considered traditional research, these outcomes can be presented in different and creative ways, which can be seen as a strength. “Claims of originality and contribution to knowledge may be demonstrated through creative outcomes which may include artefacts such as image, music, designs, models, digital media or other outcomes such as performances and exhibitions” (Candy, 2006, p. 3).

By utilizing practice-based research, I expected to encounter a range of issues that would require me to think creatively, so creating my own web series was a way for me to build knowledge from my own experiences. This approach enabled me to experience different pressures brought on by various limitations, and find the best way to either eliminate the constraint, or embrace it and find a positive way to work within its limitations. Many of the phases throughout the production process were highly experimental in order to find the best approach. One example of this during filming was when we had to film a performance scene. As the actors were mostly from theatre backgrounds, we had to experiment with how their theatre acting approach would work on screen, or if it would look over done and unprofessional. Practice-based research enables people to do research using practical experiences, enhancing their own personal knowledge, which can be beneficial for future endeavors. “Art is one of those modes of experiencing that, rather than providing givens for dealing with situations, offers apprehensions that provide potential ways of seeing situations” (Scrivener, 2002, p. 12), therefore when utilizing practice-based research, there are new ways of seeing and analyzing outcomes that would be different if it was done another way.

McNiff says “we learn to live integrated spiritual, mental and social lives through studying our practices in company with others who are doing the same, and commit to the idea and practice of research as the basis of learning, embedded in practice” (McNiff, 2013, p. 5), suggesting that research through practice is an excellent way to learn, by integrating practice and research into one effective and efficient method to process what is being studied. However, there are also constraints in using practice-based research, in particular when researching creative or artistic activities. For creative people, working in a setting such as an art or film studio helps to facilitate the process of making an artistic product, but for research to be effective, practice-based research practitioners need to also focus on gathering information. This can change the way they work, creating

constraints upon the researcher (Candy, 2006), such as experiencing new stresses about documenting findings in a different way than what they have become accustomed to. For the purposes of my research, practice-based research was the most effective option for my learning, as being able to create a media product was more beneficial than a stand alone analysis of other creator's work.

1.2.2 INTERVIEWS

Along with the practice-based research approach, I am also utilizing interviews with professionals in the filmmaking community. The core reason I decided to use interviews as a key method throughout my research is because it was an effective way to gain insights into what individuals' encounter creating a web series in a professional setting and how that differs to a student setting. The interviews were in-depth, casual, recorded, then transcribed. My approach was casual, as I wanted the interviewees to feel relaxed, so I also conducted them in a place of their choosing. Burke Johnson and Lisa Turner state there are three types of interviews: the pure qualitative interview, the informal conversational interview, and the standardized open-ended interview (Johnson & Turner, 2003). My interviews fall into the pure qualitative interview, where the interview was "unstructured, exploratory, open ended, and typically in-depth so that various topics can be explored effectively" (Johnson & Turner, 2003, p. 305). This seemed appropriate as this allowed us to discuss topics within the realm of filming, writing, and beginning to create a web series, along with some discussion about other media products, such as film and television. This was beneficial as certain connections between web series, film, and television became clear to me.

I selected my interviewees on the basis of their previous history within the film and television industry, and was conscious of their developments throughout their web series. Emmett Skilton has worked on various New Zealand and international productions, and is now working on his own web series entitled *Auckland Love*. Louis Mendiola has worked extensively in film and television, acting and writing scripts for many years. Most recently Mendiola has been writing for a web series entitled *The Misadventures of Suzy Boon*, a New Zealand production filmed in Auckland. As they are both active in the New Zealand web series community, I found gaining their perspective on what they encounter throughout their own media making process extremely useful when making my own web series. When

conducting interviews in person, there are several possible strengths and weaknesses that should be considered. Some of the strengths are that they are a good way to see how an interviewee reacts to certain questions, and their tone of voice when they answer. In being able to gauge their tone, it is easier to see how interested they are in the content being discussed. Along with this, the interviewer is able to probe the interviewee into talking in more depth about the subject, allowing valuable insights to be gained. Interviewing someone in person also allows the interviewer to ask for more explanation and get confirmation if there is any confusion (Johnson & Turner, 2003). Interviews also come with weaknesses. They can be time consuming and expensive (Johnson & Turner, 2003), especially when including travel time and transcribing. Interviews take longer to conduct than questionnaires, but there is more opportunity to clarify during a face-to-face encounter.

1.2.3 AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Autoethnography is “an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 1). Autoethnography can help to reveal things that may not become apparent through quantitative research, enabling the researchers to produce “a richer understanding of many social phenomena than can be achieved through other observational methods” (Babbie, 2007, p. 287). Autoethnography stems from the field of anthropology, and shares storytelling features with other genres of self-narrative, but exceeds simple narration of self to engage in cultural analysis and interpretation (Chang, 2016). Rather than relying on the accounts of others, autoethnography gives the researcher access to their own data that they gather through their experiences, as well as the ability to see and reflect back upon these experiences (Chang, 2007). Personal narratives are considered one of the more controversial forms of autoethnography, particularly if they are not accompanied by a more traditional analysis, for example, Bigger states that details included in an autoethnography may be omitted or deliberately obscured out of sensitivity to others during the writing of the autoethnography (Bigger, 2009). Personal narratives propose to understand some aspect of life as it crosses with a cultural context, connecting to the various people involved (cast and crew) as co-researchers. An autoethnographer develops understandings through dialogue with

informants other than themselves (Anderson, 2006). An additional benefit for doing and sharing autoethnographies is that gives readers the chance to access the author's world and use what they learn from the author's experiences to reflect on, and understand, their own world (Ellis, 2004), their own social selves, and their decision-making within their practices (Nash, 2004).

Throughout Chapter Four, I examine the process of creating *CTTV* through to completion. By using a more personal voice throughout my autoethnographic piece of writing, I was able to more clearly convey the experience throughout multiple areas of the creative process of making *CTTV* in order to explain my journey to the final product. This shift in voice is utilized to distinguish my own practice-based experience from my interviews and secondary sources of research.

I found this autoethnographic approach to be a useful way to express why I went through the process of creating a web series in addition to examining existing web series online. Though there are many forms of and approaches to autoethnography, the one closest to what I am doing is the personal narratives form, which involves "stories about authors who view themselves as the phenomenon and write evocative narratives specifically focused on their academic, research, and personal lives" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 7). Although there some who argue autoethnography is too artful and not scientific enough with a reputation for being "too aesthetic, emotional, and therapeutic" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 10), I found having a change of voice and tone throughout a piece of writing useful. It can give the reader a better way to engage with the content, allowing them to immerse themselves in the process and procedures experienced by the writer. "Autoethnographic writing does not merely tell stories about yourself garnished with details, but actively interprets your stories to make sense of how they are connected with others' stories" (Chang, 2016, p. 149). It is an effective way to share experiences and see how the stories told by one author can, in some way, connect with someone else's story. I found using an autoethnographic approach allowed me to better understand myself, and how the experiences I encountered on set shaped the overall creative project.

1.3 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Incorporating the theory and background research was an incredibly beneficial process to go through before starting work on *CTTV*, as I was able to better understand how web series developed into what they are today, and what some of the best ways are to approach working on this project. Discovering how practice-based research, interviews, and autoethnographic approaches work well as a combination, allowed me to figure out how this kind of research can be completed and what are some of the best ways to gain insights from myself and other people. In using these approaches, I am able to present this project and research along with the background knowledge and methods to support it.

CHAPTER 2: WEB SERIES CASE STUDIES

The objective of this chapter will be to see what distinguishes web series as a media form distinctive from other forms. In order to do this, I examined four different web series, both local and international. These web series have been released within the past 6 years, and contain aspects I consider unique to web series, allowing me to examine how different creators approach web series. Each of these web series is of different qualities, showing how aspects, such as budget, can affect the finished product. Two of the web series are animated, and two are live action, demonstrating how web series can be creative and unique.

In our fast paced world, web series could be considered an ideal way to get a media fix, as they can be as short as one minute, to as long as thirty minutes, with many genres and cross-genres to be discovered. Now that platforms, such as YouTube and Vimeo, are readily available for almost anyone to post their own content online, some people consider that only amateur or inexperienced filmmakers make web series. Web series are often associated with user-generated content, but in fact there are a variety of professional, semi-professional, and amateur web series (Kuhn, 2014). Todd Bieber, a writer for *Filmmaker Magazine*, stated that web series have “become synonymous with an “Open Mic Night” at the local coffee shop - a place for green artists to come to test new material and perform overplayed cover songs while only their friends and family clap enthusiastically” (Bieber, 2015, para. 3). This may be a common assumption, however many professionals’ like JJ Fong, Ally Xue, and Perlina Lau, makers of the New Zealand web series *Flat3*, created a high quality web series that gained attention and funding from New Zealand on Air for additional seasons.

Web series often use conventions associated with low-budget filmmaking such as, using equipment already owned, like a mobile phone camera and the editing tools that came with a laptop or computer. They may use camera and lighting techniques generally considered unprofessional in film or television, including over-exposure, or having crew shadows in the frame. Luckily, there are web series like *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl* (Vanderpoort, 2011), *C.R.U.M.B.S* (Leighton, Evens, & Cooper, 2013), *Mollusks* (Hempel, 2011) and

Theatre of Wet (Teh, 2015) that demonstrate what can be produced on a smaller budget, made by people who appear to have created a professional environment. These particular web series have many similarities and differences, illustrating both positive and negative points of making your own content. Some of these being that creators get to tell their own stories, and that if it is done in a non-professional environment people rely on friends and family for feedback, which is not always dependable. At the end of this chapter I will discuss certain codes and conventions I have observed throughout these web series in order to encapsulate what I think web series are.

2.1.1 THE MISADVENTURES OF AWKWARD BLACK GIRL

The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl (Vanderpoort, 2011), is a comedy about an awkward woman, J, and how she copes with co-workers and love interests which place her in awkward, uncomfortable situations. It covers topics many people would relate to, such as work, co-workers, and experiences while driving. This would be appealing to many different audiences, as it has been said this web series is refreshing to watch because it has a realistic portrayal of African-American women. Erin Stegeman, of *The Tangled Web*, “praised *Awkward Black Girl* for defying stereotypes of African-American woman and being ‘an uber-relatable slice of life’” (Landau, 2015, p. 223).

Episode one of season one, ‘The Stop Sign,’ explores the idea of constantly seeing the same person at the stop sign on the way to work every day, and how one might respond to this situation. J’s initial response is to attempt to hide in her car by slouching down in the seat, which eventually does not work. Then she goes through a myriad of responses, such as pretending she is on the phone and telling them she will see them at work. She then gives up, and awkwardly talks to A, her co-worker who she “accidentally” slept with at an office party. Only certain people would be able to relate to this, which adds to the comedic aspect of it. This episode utilizes a lot of hand held camera work, especially when J is in the car. This camera technique makes the overall production look low budget, as if anyone could make this type of show at home with their phones or cameras. This may add to the appeal for some audiences, making them feel as though they could produce a show of this quality themselves. This may also mean they become more interested in show, and feel as though they relate to it more. The hand-held

camera technique could also be seen as a symbolic representation of J's personal life. She is not particularly confident in the presence of others, and the shaking camera may represent instability in her life. We get a further sense of this when J is in her home making up violent rap lyrics, seeming much more confident and outgoing by herself. The rap lyrics we hear are, "I'm a bad bitch, you're a pussy nigger" (Vanderpoort, 2011), and it could be argued that this continues to show that not everything in her life is stable. Another example of what makes this particular episode look low budget is when J's boyfriend, D, leaves the house after he breaks up with her. He opens the door and a burst of white light comes flooding in, making the shot over-exposed (fig. 2.1). Over-exposure is not always



Fig 2.1. *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl* (Vanderpoort, 2011)

seen as professional, and makes it look like a lower quality programme. The over-exposure happens each time D enters or exits the front door, covering parts of him in white, or turning him into a silhouette, which could show he was just a figure in J's life who was not going to be there for long, and she did not really know the real him. Then when we see A in the car at the stop sign, he is never in a place where he is over-exposed, which could represent he is going to be a constant figure in her life, whether or not it is a continued romantic involvement. Within this episode, these two techniques do not deter from the overall watching experience, as it fits within the stylistic approach that reoccurs in this web series. The low budget appearance and the over-exposure create a specific trademark style for the series that suits both the situations and the characters.

In episodes two and three, 'The Job' and 'The Hallway,' we are introduced to characters who might be recognized in our own places of work, and to stereotypes

commonly talked about. In 'The Job' we meet characters described as "the co-worker who can't take the hint" and "the loud black bitch" (Vanderpoort, 2011). These characters are presented to us through voice-over, however they are only occasionally seen again through these episodes. In putting these characters in like this, the audience is able to identify with J, and find her situation funny. One stereotype that is introduced to us from the first episode is that black people like violent rap music. When J gets stressed out, she says she needs to go write down some violent rap lyrics and proceeds to say "...stupid bitch nigger, I hope you drown..." (Vanderpoort, 2011), which would have a completely different effect if the lead character were white. The reason for this is because if the character were white, the audience might perceive this as blatant racism and become offended. The violent rapping is carried on through the rest of these episodes whenever J is feeling stressed or angry, which works well in a comedic sense. The violent rapping gives you insight into what J is really feeling, even though it comes across as 'over the top'. The rap communicates how J is feeling by showing how she acts in her private space. She does not need to worry about offending anyone or creating an awkward situation, so she is able to express how she is feeling. Her tone of voice and the lyrics are contrasting as she still has a sense of awkwardness about her, but her lyrics communicate an inward confidence we do not often get to see.

The director and writers of this series appear to have a very good understanding of its audience, where to draw the line with their use of racial stereotypes, and how to create comedic dialogue. These episodes span between 3 minutes 40 seconds, and 5 minutes 30 seconds, which seems suitable for the content they are presenting, and did not feel as though it dragged on too long, or it did not give us enough information. By putting the characters into relatable situations, the audience will continue to watch and follow the story, without getting bored or confused. Now that web series are more popular, a lot of indie filmmakers use them as a way to start their careers, as one of the biggest constraints for filmmakers wishing to create content is funding. Having short episodes is cheaper and more achievable, as opposed to a longer format. As web series continue to get more popular, they have a bigger chance of getting funding from outside sources, so then the episodes can become longer if the style of the web series allows it. Another technique that continues through the entire series of *Awkward Black Girl*

is the use of voice-over. This technique is not often used in television or film, as it is considered ‘lazy writing’, explaining the narrative to the audience instead of showing it. “If you’re writing VO because you don’t know how to show what’s happening, well, then you’re just being lazy” (Kirkland, 2011, para. 12). One possible reason as to why this technique is accepted in web series, is because there is far less time to tell a cohesive narrative. Although, as Kirkland suggests, voice-overs are only acceptable “if you decide that it would benefit your script, it should be the last thing you write, not the first, and not even anywhere in between” (Kirkland, 2011, para 12). Because of the stylistic choices made throughout *Awkward Black Girl*, this constant use of voiceover works well and does not make it appear as though the scriptwriter has been lazy. It works well with the comedy used throughout each episode, and the audience gets a good understanding of how the characters feel in the situations they find themselves. There are many television series and films that use voiceovers, which adds to a sense of continuity from one episode or scene to the next. Voiceover can also provide backstory so the audience does not miss key moments within the series. Although Kirkland is correct saying voiceovers can be a sign of lazy writing, voiceover can also be a sign of a writer creatively helping the audience understand the story, allowing them to make connections with important characters.

2.1.2 C.R.U.M.B.S

C.R.U.M.B.S (Leighton, Evens, & Cooper, 2013) is an animated comedy about a group of detectives, represented by a strawberry, chocolate milk, and bread, who work together to solve crimes committed by the evil Rattikus Kahn. This web series also plays on the idea of stereotypes, and has a ‘black’ character, portrayed by the chocolate milk, which appears to be somewhat like Mr. T from the *A-Team*, which works very well for comedic effect. The intertextuality used here to bring together two very different styles of programmes works by subtly referencing a text that is well known by the intended audience, without specifically mentioning the programme being referred to. Intertextuality is constant throughout the episodes in this series, for example Lieutenant Magnum Bap, who is reminiscent of *CSI: Miami*’s (Donahue, Mendelsohn, & Zuiker, 2002) Horatio Caine character, and with Detective Tickleberry, who is similar to *NCIS*’s (Bellisario & McGill, 2003) Abby Sciuto. This is a clever technique, that shows the audience characters they already know and love, but in a different light

and humor. This web series appears to be higher quality than *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl*, possibly because it is animated, so more is within the creators control, such as camera techniques and lighting.

Episode one, 'Case #1: To catch a rat' seemed reminiscent of the Disney animated movie *101 Dalmatians*, in that Rattikus Kahn is skinning bananas to make clothing, much like Cruella De'Vil's plan for the puppies. One of *C.R.U.M.B.S.* main forms of comedy is its ridiculous and constant use of puns. The scriptwriters were very clever in how they incorporated puns, by pushing them to their absolute limit, and finding the perfect place to stop. An example of these kinds of puns are, "Got a hunch?" "Only when I crouch," and "This is the third bananacide we've had this week sir," "Two more and we'll have ourselves a bunch" (Leighton, Evens, & Cooper, 2013).

This style of comedy continues throughout the next two episodes, 'Case #2: Hot Fizz' and 'Case #3: Sour Apples,' and (in my opinion) at no point does it ever become awkward to watch. Of course, audience response is subjective, as not everyone appreciates the same kind of comedy. This series has taken a risk by relying heavily on puns, as some people dislike the use of puns. We get introduced to the antagonist rather late in episode one, and when the audience does finally see him, he comes across as more flamboyant and harmless as opposed to menacing and scary. This enhances the ridiculousness of this show in an enjoyable way. *C.R.U.M.B.S* features local celebrities, such as comedian Rose Matefeo and ZM radio presenter Vaughan Smith as lead characters. This is a good way to build up an audience for a new web series by using the celebrities' current fan base, giving the show publicity without having to pay for it. Local celebrities are more likely to understand the kiwi comedy running throughout the series, and so the delivery of the comedy is more believable and the audience gets to enjoy hearing familiar voices associated with New Zealand comedy.

Throughout episodes two and three, viewers are presented with more puns New Zealanders can relate to. Episode two centers around the pineapple fizzy drink character, who could explode at any moment, allowing puns like "I'm Pineapple Fizz, so Pizz for short" (Leighton, Evens, & Cooper, 2013). This pun works well if you grew up as a child in New Zealand as the only fizzy drinks left over at a party or disco were the pineapple ones as it was the least popular flavor. This

series also mocks the way action movies create suspense with their use of music to set the mood of a scene. In a tense moment, action movies tend to use low, intense music that gets louder as something unknown or threatening gets closer. *C.R.U.M.B.S* subtly uses this technique in episode 7 when Detective Tickleberry is going back and forth between questioning Rattikus Kahn and the hospital bed where the other two detectives are. As she talks to Rattikus, the music sounds more intense, and when she goes to the hospital it becomes more dramatic creating a comedic effect. Often in an action film, just after a solution has been found, the characters will have a short space of time to complete the task before something bad happens. *C.R.U.M.B.S* seems to comment on this when one of the detectives says, "He will explode 10 seconds after we come up with a solution".

All three episodes are around 4 minutes 20 seconds to 4 minutes 50 seconds long, though I felt they could potentially be longer without ruining the comedy.

Throughout these episodes we get a good sense of who the characters are and what their collective mission is throughout the series, and for some a sense of nostalgia is present during some of the New Zealand based puns. These New Zealand puns are vitally important to the comedy within *C.R.U.M.B.S*, as it feels as though a lot of the comedy relies on it, along with having the New Zealand celebrities voicing the characters. If this web series did not have the New Zealand based puns, it would still work as the intertextual references made throughout are well executed.

2.1.3 MOLLUSKS

Mollusks (Hempel, 2011), is an animated comedy centered around two mollusks, Ryan and Erik Fitzpatrick, who are running a cafe to escape their previous life of drugs and crime. The beginning of this web series seems reminiscent of *SpongeBob SquarePants* (Hillenburg, Drymon, & Hill, 1999) (so uses intertextuality in a similar way to *C.R.U.M.B.S*), and therefore appears as though it is a series for children. However, this changes rather quickly when the audience learns these brothers were criminals who were addicted to crack, showing Erik appearing as though he is high. As part of getting to know the Fitzpatrick brothers, viewers learn about their backstory and how they became involved with Vinnie, the leader of a criminal gang. This seems rather cliché, the brothers' father died so Vinnie took care of them until they were old enough and now they want to

get out of the gang. We meet other characters like Mofo, Vinnie's right hand man, who is British and sounds as though he is part of the mafia, and we also meet Vanessa, Vinnie's porn star wife who stars in 'Two Squids, One Cup,' which could be a take on *Two Girls, One Cup*, a popular video in 2007. However, as this is a New Zealand made web series, the 'Two Squids, One Cup' reference could be a reference to Taika Waititi's short film, *Two Cars, One Night* (Waititi, 2004). Although this is a completely different genre and story to what is being discussed within this particular web series, the similarity of the names and the fact that they are both New Zealand made may make a connection with some people. All this information is learned in the first episode 'Cold Turkey: Aisle 7.' You get a good sense of the characters and their relationships with each other, and a clear idea of what they want. It appears to be a good set up for future episodes, as we now know all the relevant information.

Throughout the episodes examined, there are a few aspects that seem odd or unfitting to the series. An example of this would be the dialogue, or the length of time certain dialogue pieces go for. For instance, there is a part in the first episode where Vinnie laughs evilly at the end of the episode, but it does not seem to go on quite long enough, which makes it feel awkward to watch. The laugh feels as though it needed to go on longer, or be much shorter for it to work for comedic purposes. It seems as though the director or editors did not completely understand the idea of comedic timing. Another example of dialogue not working well is in episode three, where we meet Ryan and Erik's friend. As the brothers are running away from Vinnie, they end up at this man's house, where he says, "You boys must be as tired as a pair of Japanese Wobbegongs!" This comes off as an odd thing to say if you are not aware a Japanese Wobbegong is a type of carpet shark that is a weak swimmer. It seems as though some of the jokes in this series rely on the viewer knowing about marine life, and if they do not, the comedic effect is lost. Since a majority of these jokes seem to require the audience to have prior knowledge, the target audience for this is instantly narrowed. The plot throughout this web series is constant, the Fitzpatrick brothers trying to get away from a drug lord, making it seem like an animated comedy version of *The Sopranos* (Chase, 1999). For someone who enjoys this kind of comedy, the length of each episode would be appropriate, as they are within 3 minutes 30 seconds to just over 5 minutes long, however, viewers who find this type of comedy annoying or

frustrating may feel they are long and drawn out, with parts of the story feeling irrelevant.

2.1.4 THEATRE OF WET

Theatre of Wet (Teh, 2015) is a live action comedy about stepbrothers, Ryan and Joe, who purchase a theatre. The first episode introduces the brothers and explains how they came to own the theatre. There is no way for the audience to know Ryan and Joe are brothers, unless the viewer reads the explanatory synopsis first. Neither character seems particularly likeable, as one starts off rather negative, and the other seems overly enthusiastic and annoying. It almost seems as though the creators were wanting to make a web series all about satirizing people who participate in theatre, but have not gone about it in quite the right way. They have made the two lead characters very dramatic, making them do things that do not look natural. This is meant to be the joke as they just bought a theatre, but the comedy does not seem to work well. The character Joe constantly talks as though he is a narrator in a superhero movie, which sounds like a fantastic idea, but in practice becomes more annoying than funny, and is also a little confusing. There appears to be no reason for him to be talking this way.

This first episode of this web series is full of ideas that, if executed differently, could make a hilarious web series. Like *Mollusks*, this web series relies on audience members who have prior knowledge of the theatre world, which limits their target audience. Unlike *Mollusks*, this seems intentional and works to their advantage. As this is intentional, the jokes should work, but as they do not seem to be well executed, the comedy is lost. During the first episodes, the audience does not get a sense as to what the characters are like, and what their wants and needs are. We understand Joe loves the idea of owning a theatre, and Ryan is less keen, but no other information is provided, and we do not understand why Joe wanted to buy the theatre in the first place. In episode two, we meet two new characters that want to hire the theatre for a performance. They are painful to watch, as they are so unnatural and their dialogue does not work. This is because it is not written in a way that seems like a natural conversation, and partly because the actors portraying the roles are presenting not as characters as such, but as people who have been told to say these particular lines in a particular way. Again, this dialogue is meant to be a joke about how theatre people are always in theatre

'mode', and it carries on into their everyday dealings. During this episode, there is an odd part where Ryan is outside and we quickly see a shot of a girl who only says 'hello,' and scares Ryan. Nothing more is seen about this, so feels out of place. It is possibly there to add an air of mystery, or to further the storyline into a spookier area, perhaps to suggest the theatre is haunted. Haunted theatres are a common myth amongst older theatres, so this appears to be another joke.

In episode three, the audience is forced to watch a cringe-worthy theatre performance by the characters who hired the theatre. During this piece, it is obvious the creators are attempting to mock theatre performers, but have done so in a way that is uneasy to watch. The only line of dialogue is "chest-knee," which is repeated over and over again, until it is interrupted by Ryan or Joe. This piece does not work particularly because the audience is meant to find this funny, but instead it can make some want to stop watching after the first minute of the 2 minute 30 second episode. This entire scene looks as though it is a personal joke for the creators and their family and friends. This would not be an issue if this was for private viewings, but as it is intended for the public, the comedy does not come across as intended. There are many moments in this web series that feel irrelevant or unnecessary to the characters' development or to the storyline, and could work better as a web series if the creators stopped trying to mercilessly mock the theatre person stereotype, or discovered a different way to do so. This web series seems more like a group of friends who have come together to create content as opposed to professionals who are creating content for more than friends and family to enjoy.

Throughout these four different web series, a sense of what kind of content can be produced has been gained. Analyzing *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl*, *C.R.U.M.B.S*, *Mollusks*, and *Theatre of Wet*, helps to explore how ways of experimenting with web series can demonstrate what works and what does not work. They have shown that web series can be whatever you like, and only through trial and error can you create content people will enjoy. As it is with any form of media, it is not possible to please everyone, and there will always be aspects some people will like, and some will dislike, as everyone's tastes are unique. All four web series have different takes as to what they think works, and what does not, and together comment on how web series content creators have

more control over their content as they do not have to follow the same rules as television or film.

It seems there are many different features web series include at one point or another. Intertextuality, comedy, parody, and participatory culture are important features throughout many of the web series case studies. By having intertextuality throughout a new web series scriptwriters show what kind of audience they are after, and by including references to popular texts they will begin to build their own audience base. This is similar with testing parody and comedic features, to see if there is an audience out there looking for entertainment that is different and new.

2.2 CODES AND CONVENTIONS

There are not currently specific codes and conventions web series are well known for because this is an emerging media form. Taking this into consideration, I have come up with a list of codes and conventions I think capture what web series are, based on observations from the above case studies, and from creating my own web series. This includes: length, a low budget appearance, the use of comedy and parody, intertextuality, and *web-specific transparent immediacy*.

2.2.1 LENGTH

In examining these four web series, a common element was their short duration. No episode went longer than 15 minutes, and some only went for a period of 2 minutes. This is because often when an audience member watches a web series, they do so without intending to commit a large amount of time to viewing, although, this is by no means a rule. Emmett Skilton said his next web series is going to be around 30 minutes long, and structured more like a television show, but presented online like a web series (Skilton, 2016). This reinforces the idea that web series do not have any specific rules they need to adhere to, and that breaking web series 'tradition' can be encouraged to further the reach of web series to a wider audience. There is still a long way before any traditions are established within the web series realm, but with these early attempts, both successful and unsuccessful, online media creators are able to pave the way to discovering the

most beneficial methods to create web series, and that starts with finding a length of time consumers are willing to invest into watching a web series.

The length of each web series episode needs to be thought about carefully in order to keep the audience from losing interest. Each episode needs to be long enough for the audience to feel like it is a worthwhile use of their time, along with being able to tell a story within a shortened time span. The positive aspect of a web series episode is they only have to be as long as that particular story line needs it to be, and creators need not worry about making sure each episode is the same length. With no programming rules to follow, the creators can choose how they want to present the story. An example of this is in *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl* where J is introducing the viewers to the important characters in her life. This episode is only 3 minutes 40 seconds long, with the purpose of the episode being sufficiently fulfilled in that time. Various other episodes within this series go for as long as 13 minutes.

2.2.2 LOW BUDGET APPEARANCE

There are many aspects that contribute to the appearance of being low budget, although just because the production may appear low budget, that is not necessarily always the case. Two of the web series discussed above, *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl* and *Theatre of Wet*, look as though they were produced on a low budget. This is an important aspect to web series because it gives amateur filmmakers an impression that anyone can make a web series, even with limited funding. This is an excellent thought for a web series to provoke, as it ultimately helps this kind of new media gain more attention and inspire more creators to become part of this media world. The low budget appearance is forgiving of traditionally poor techniques, such as over-exposure and shaky hand held camera. This is both a positive and negative aspect of this kind of production, as it seems to give web series a bad name within the filmmaking community, but allows up and coming filmmakers to experiment with stylistic choices at a low cost.

Watching a television program is a different experience to watching a web series, as audiences expect a higher quality production - particularly if they have paid for content, such as cinema or paid television. Watching web series is an event that

tends to happen in ones' home, so it is a much more intimate viewing experience than cinema. One of the reasons why some people within the film community see it as a purely amateur production sphere is because almost anyone with some kind of technical ability can upload content to the internet and label it as a web series. This means viewers have to sift through the poor quality web series to find ones they enjoy. Bieber said "talk to people in 'the industry' on the subject and the general consensus is that web series are often: amateur, rushed and self-indulgent, light on storytelling and character" (Bieber, 2015, para. 6). However, there are many professionals who have worked in the film and television industry who are becoming more open to the idea of working on a web series as a way to further their careers.

2.2.3 COMEDY AND PARODY

The use of comedy and parody was another common element in these four web series. Web series cross many different genres, but comedy seems to be the most popular genre for New Zealand creators (Skilton, 2016). Comedy refers to a work intended to be humorous by inducing laughter, whereas, parody imitates the style of other content (e.g. television or films), normally for comic effect, and often by applying that style to a different or inappropriate subject. An example of how comedy was used is in episode 5 of *C.R.U.M.B.S.*, is where Detective Tickleberry says, "why did I never tell you I was in love with you? And why did I leave out such an importance piece of character development till now?!" (Leighton, Evens, & Cooper, 2013). This works well because filmmakers would find it amusing, as this is completely new information not exposed to viewers in the previous four episodes. This kind of self-exposure, where filmmakers point out their own mistakes in a very obvious fashion, is funny because it is unexpected as it is not a style consumers would often see in a film or television production. In the *Theatre of Wet*, parody is used when the theatre performers enter for the first time. These characters speak unnaturally, as mentioned before, and mock the way some members of society perceive theatre performers to be. There is a common stereotype that theatre performers are always ready to perform at any chance they get, and these characters are meant to personify this stereotype. Viewers like to laugh and feel good about what they are watching, which is why I think web series tend toward the comedy route as opposed to another genre.

2.2.4 INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality is “the presence of actual elements of other texts within a text” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 39), an aspect that presented itself strongly within the web series I examined, as well as being in my own web series, *CTTV*. The use of intertextuality is important because it introduces elements recognizable to an audience, potentially drawing them in to watch further episodes of the web series. The web series *C.R.U.M.B.S* was particularly good at intertwining intertextuality with the rest of their storyline without it becoming overbearing and distracting from the narrative. They do this through the way they designed their lead characters, strongly suggesting character types many viewers would recognize. An example of intertextuality is in episode 5 ‘Soya Later,’ where one of the lead characters, Detective Choc Brown, references two fictional characters. First, he is reminiscent of Mr. T from *The A-Team* (Cannel & Lupo, 1983), as mentioned earlier, and then he briefly acts like Terry Jeffords from *Brooklyn Nine Nine* (Goor & Schur, 2013). In having this character portraying recognized characters in a different light, viewers may feel as though they are being treated as an intelligent audience. This is a good way to build an audience base, as they will appreciate the familiar characters being presented, and remember it from the web series. Writers do not have to be aware they are putting intertextuality into their web series. With *C.R.U.M.B.S*, it appears obvious that their use of intertextuality is intentional, and their web series is based around the use of puns and dry humor. As I was writing *CTTV*, I was not aware I was incorporating intertextuality until I began filming. Once I had realized, I discovered *CTTV* heavily references Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and Disney’s *The Lion King* (Allers & Minkoff, 1994), both directly and indirectly. A select group of people who received an advanced screening of the unfinished product noticed it, and said that is what made it funny. This reinforced my idea that intertextuality is a smart and creative technique to use when creating a web series.

2.2.5 HYPERMEDIACY AND TRANSPARENT IMMEDIACY

Remediation is the appropriation of the content of one medium into another, including the blending of old and new media (Bolter and Grusin 2002); a photo may be remediated as a moving image, or a television show may become a film or cartoon series. Rather than drastically changing the media scape, digital

technologies have altered and added to older media (Bolter and Grusin 2002). Remediation theory suggests that media can be divided into two principal styles: hypermediacy and transparent immediacy (Peirce, 2011).

The idea of hypermediacy is that content holds a “windowed style” that “privileges fragmentation, indeterminacy, and heterogeneity and . . . emphasizes process or performance rather than the finished art object” (Bolter and Grusin 2002, p. 31). This style affects the structure and content of web series, in that it means they do not have to have a beginning, middle, or end as is usual in other more linear forms of television programmes or films. Transparent immediacy means viewers are given a first-person perspective of what they are viewing, as if they were silently inside the action on the screen. Bolter and Grusin (2002) state that new media, such as web series, includes both of these elements.

Hypermediacy exists in these four web series in that they are all fragmented and indeterminate. All of the story is not exactly known, established, or defined within the first episodes, and this narrative knowledge is extended out over the course of the web series. In *The Misadventures of Awkward Black Girl*, we are able to see this by how the episodes are structured. The idea of episode one is primarily to introduce the characters to the audience, whilst also incorporating pieces of the narrative. Each episode within this series slowly explores the narrative further, giving the audience bite sized pieces of information that is easy to digest. There are practical aspects that happen within this series that reinforces the idea of viewers feeling like they are ‘dropping in’ on fragments of real lives. This happens through the use of hand-held camera, where it makes the audience feel like they are really there, watching what is happening in J’s life. In *C.R.U.M.B.S.*, we are able to see how the story is heterogeneous in both character and narrative content. We see a diverse range of characters coming together to work toward a collective goal, to stop Rattikus Khan. Because of the ridiculousness of this series, it is hard for the audience to determine what is going to happen next in the storyline, as there are many different crimes that occur. Hypermediacy is presented clearly through these web series, as they all contain elements synonymous to what hypermediacy is.

The structural elements of transparent immediacy that exist in the four web series are that audiences are given a first-person perspective as though they are part of

the character's world. Although, the audience act as silent participants. Throughout episode three of the *Theatre of Wet*, the viewers are meant to feel as though they are part of the theatre going audience, forgetting that they are watching a series on a screen, and starting to believe that they are in the presence of the actors on stage. This means that the audience has then developed a direct relationship to the contents of the web series, not just the web series itself. The narratives of these web series are told in a linear fashion. An example of this is in the structure of *Mollusks*, where we learn vital pieces of information about the two lead characters as we progress through the storyline. There does not appear to be any backtracking within this series, and the linear way in which the story is told makes it easier for an audience to watch and understand.

2.3 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

These four web series provided insights into what current web series creators think web series are, and what techniques work best for them. The codes and conventions list I have made came about from examining these web series, and looking in depth at what has been used throughout them. Although this list will no doubt change over time, I believe these are strongly presented in the web series made in recent years. These four web series showed how different creators see web series and how they approached making them. In being able to examine these before creating my own web series, I was able to determine the way I wanted to approach the filmmaking process, along with which techniques I thought would work well. Participatory culture is a significant characteristic in the web series filmmaking world, as due to the availability of technology anyone can give it a go and hone in their talents. Participatory culture plays a part in shaping web series, as creators are freer to produce what they want and present ideas to audiences that they may not usually see on traditional television. Web series allow us to watch stories and see representations that were once controlled by censorships, funding bodies, and television networks. Although, this can be seen as problematic as there is then an increased possibility of overtly racist or sexist content. As the media is saturated with American film culture, it seems important to general public and myself for local web series makers to source local talent and ideas to create uniquely New Zealand content. It is exciting to see the accessibility of this

new content, and how it is shaping the way people view media, as well as supporting up and coming directors, screenwriters, and actors.

CHAPTER 3: INTERVIEWS

When examining the interviews taken for the purpose of this study, many insights became apparent throughout. I interviewed four people, two of whom work professionally within the web series industry with previous experience in the film and television industry. The other two people interviewed were crew members who worked on *CTTV*, with less experience on film sets. The reason why I chose this mixture of interviewees is because it was important to gain insights from skilled professionals, and people who are participating out of interest, as a student, or as a hobby. Interviewing the two crew members meant I was able to see how they found the filmmaking process that was experienced by twenty different individuals, and see the strengths and weaknesses of my filmmaking approach. Louis Mendiola and Emmett Skilton were the two professionals I interviewed, as they both have successful web series currently screening online. *The Misadventures of Suzy Boon* and *Auckland Love* showcase New Zealand performers in a New Zealand setting, which is ideal for the target audience. This chapter is split into two sections, insights from professionals, and insights from amateurs, because the two groups have insights that differ due to their gap in experience and levels of professionalism. However, there are some insights that cross over between the two groups, such as thoughts on compromises and wanting to be involved in making web series.

3.1 INSIGHTS FROM AMATEURS

The core insights from the interviews with Sian Balvert and Rory Davis revolved around working for free on a low budget production, compromises, and working multiple roles in order to get additional experience.

Both Sian Balvert and Rory Davis had not worked professionally within the media world, but share a passion to be creative, and a desire to be involved in creative ventures. When asked why she wanted to be part of this production, Balvert said, “I decided to be part of the web series for the experience. I’d never done anything like this before and I knew I’d regret not doing it, and it didn’t disappoint. I met some awesome people and got to do something different” (Balvert, 2017). As someone who is heavily involved in theatre productions, Balvert was interested in expanding her experience to film to see how film

production was different to working in theatre. She mentioned that although she did not mind working for free on this project, she would have loved to have been paid for it. In saying this, she would do it again to gain more experience (Balvert, 2017). During the filming of *CTTV*, Davis was a second year Screen and Media Studies student who wanted to be part of this project for the experience. When asked if he would work on a low budget web series again, Davis said “yeah, I would definitely work on a low budget web series again... if it sounded like something I wanted to be a part of or a friend was working on it, then I would certainly not object to working on such a project” (Davis, personal communication, February 10, 2017). Davis did not mind working for free, as the experience allowed him to take charge of certain aspects of the production, giving him an idea of what it would be like on other low budget sets, and also knowledge of the fast paced nature of filming low budget web series. The reason why this web series had a fast paced nature was because we only had a certain amount of time to film in, due to budget constraints.

Balvert and Davis were both clear that the idea of having to make compromises was inevitable, along with welcoming the chance to work multiple roles during the production. For Davis, the only compromise he recalls was driving 40 minutes to the set for each day of production (Davis, 2017). The film set was in Te Aroha, approximately 40 minutes away from Hamilton. Almost all of the cast and crew had to travel, either from Hamilton or Auckland. Everyone who was part of this production thought the positives of the production outweighed the negative of having to drive this distance. Balvert stated, “I did have to say no to a few things because I was part of it, but luckily I had plenty of notice of the dates to be able to manage my time. Most things I said no to I could rework for other days” (Balvert, 2017). Balvert understood being part of this web series was a commitment for the entirety of filming, and there was no doubt she would do her job to a high standard. All of these compromises were made without it being an issue, including travel expenses that could not be reimbursed. Something else Balvert and Davis experienced was the idea of having to wear multiple hats throughout the filming process. Balvert had various roles in multiple departments. These were make up, art department, and locations. When asked what she thought of having to do this she stated:

I loved that I wasn't just one thing. The fact that I got to wear multiple hats was great for me because I love to help where I feel needed. I wasn't just sitting there doing nothing and twiddling my thumbs waiting to do the odd make up touch up where needed. I was involved in a quite a bit. I loved going to the different locations and being behind the scenes (Balvert, 2017).

Having these different roles meant Balvert's skills were well used, and she was not sitting around wasting time where she could have been aiding the production in some other way. Davis was also involved in multiple roles, including art department, locations, and sound. Davis said, "it was really good and fun to be involved with different aspects of the production, especially dressing the set and location scouting" (Davis, 2017). As Davis is interested in working on more film sets behind the scenes, being able to have a taste of various roles was beneficial to him. Having different roles allowed Davis to see what interested him the most, and gave him some experience in these different areas. Although having multiple roles can be a daunting idea, both Balvert and Davis embraced this opportunity and worked hard in each area they were assigned to.

3.2 INSIGHTS FROM PROFESSIONALS

The core insights that came from the interviews with Louis Mendiola and Emmett Skilton revolved around constraints, the popularity of web series today, and compromises.

When asked about the kind of constraints they faced, the ways these were approached were similar. Mendiola mentioned one of his constraints was that the whole series had to be filmed over three days as people were working and lending gear for free, meaning they had to consider their limitations as they were writing their script. "We knew that we had to make all our episode's kind of revolve with minimal locations. As well as actors, but given that still make it as, you know, create as much impact for the lead character Suzy, so making her situation as an outsider really prominent" (Mendiola, 2016). It was an interesting constraint for the writers of *The Misadventures of Suzy Boon* to find a way to tell Suzy's story with restrictions on where that story could take place and how many characters could be apart of it. Looking back over how the web series is constructed, this

particular constraint did not seem to affect the overall product, if anything it seems to have aided the production. Having limited places in which Suzy's story take place means viewers become familiar with each location, and associate particular things that happen within a certain location. For example, when Suzy goes back to her home the audience expects an interaction with her father will occur as Suzy often interacts with her father in this location.

Skilton mentioned the kinds of constraints he faced revolved around finding equipment cheap and getting people to invest themselves completely in the production. For season one, Auckward Love had a budget of \$5,000, and by the time they got to season two their budget had increased to \$40,000, as funders saw the potential in this web series. This was a huge change, as he found once they had more money, people started to become more invested.

One of the constraints I found in season one is that people sort of - they wanted to be there but it felt a little bit like we were making amateur work. Right? So, everyone is sort of like 'aww, hey man, I might be, like, a couple of hours late that day. You know, I'm working late the night before.' Whereas you wouldn't do that in a professional environment. There was a certain level of investment that, you know, I think people are going, okay well this is a web series, cool. What's it going to be? Is it going to be any good? Yeah, I'll invest sort of, you know, 70% of myself. See what happens (Skilton, 2016).

One possible reason some people have this outlook when it comes to web series is because they associate a small budget and low production values to a poor quality production. People may assume if a production does not have the financial backing from a known source it is not worth the time and effort required to make it. Skilton mentioned he did not see a low budget as a form of constraint. It meant that he and his team were forced into finding new, creative, solutions in order to make components of the filmmaking process happen. He also said that it depends on each individual's mentality, how that translated into a group setting, and deciding whether you want to make it a constraint or not. Constraints, which are usually seen as having a negative impact, were turned into a positive and were seen as challenges that motivated team members throughout the process.

Lars von Trier developed the Dogme 95 approach to filmmaking, where the notion of using obstructions is used as a means of promoting creativity in filmmaking. Von Trier started Dogme 95 in 1995 with the idea to return to “traditional values of story, acting, and theme, and excluding the use of elaborate special effects or technology” (Pool, 2015, p. 92). Within the Dogme 95 approach, a set of rules is given to a filmmaker, and they are required to abide by it. These rules restrict what is available to the filmmakers. Whether the Dogme 95 approach is used intentionally or not, it is interesting to think about how filmmakers are already using an approach that encourages the use of obstructions and creative ways of thinking to get around them.

Both Skilton and Mendiola said one of the reasons web series are becoming popular is because they appeal to audiences and make them feel as though they can make a web series themselves.

Because it really, I mean, you don't have to have a budget to do it. It's quite cool. People are gonna forgive technical stuff, I mean you can't forgive sound, you have to be able to listen to it. If you film something on an iPhone, no one really cares. If it's funny, like, if you look at like Broadcity or earlier stuff, they were doing web stuff- it was just the content really, rather than the style that really shone through. And its almost like people embrace that more, it's like “oh cool, you know, they have nothing and they're making something.” So I just think anyone can do it, if you have an idea you don't have to go through the normal way making something, like for the TV system, you can just go out and make something if you have enough resources (Mendiola, 2016).

Obviously, not everyone who enjoys watching web series is a filmmaker with resources. Seeing a production made in such a way may make people think they would be capable of creating similar content with their iPhones or tablets, potentially encouraging new filmmakers to engage with this medium. This is one way of not only increasing the web series popularity, but also changing initial thoughts on what they are and who is making them.

Web series is a format that allows people to tell stories that are not usually seen on mainstream media, as in general, television companies are looking for concepts

with the goal of making profit. People who are funding and making web series seem to prioritize making profit less than what television companies do. For many web series creators, going through the process of making a web series is what they aim to accomplish, and if any profit comes from that it is an added bonus. This means web series have a chance to broadcast new stories and storytelling methods to an online audience, which may otherwise be ignored. Mendiola said this idea that anyone can make them can spark something within people that makes them want to tell their own stories. “Do I have a great idea? Do I have a story to tell? If I do, then, you know, I don’t need millions of dollars, I only need tens of thousands of dollars, I might only need one thousand dollars to make my web series” (Mendiola, 2016). Web series are cheaper to make than television or film, as you can make a web series for very little money, often without having to sacrifice high quality production values.

I don’t need \$8 million to make a web series. I could do it on, shit, 100th of the money and make something nearly just as good, I believe. And that’s to do with that whole more money more problems thing. Once you have \$100,000 rather than \$10,000 people deserve to be paid more, things cost a lot more. But when you’re really working with a constraint, you’re actually, you achieve a lot more than you think you can. So, with web series, everything is so low budget that anyone can do it. I think it’s definitely the digital age as well, people are seeing things all over YouTube, and there’s dedicated websites, and funding bodies that give money to web series now. So, really, you make web series because that’s where everything is going. I think there’s going to be a lot less money in TV soon, and a lot more money for digital (Skilton, 2016).

Slowly, a lot of media content and media viewing is moving to the internet, making it a major place for viewing content. Film and television are held to a much higher standard than web series because of the amount of money it takes to create a project on a larger scale. As Skilton mentioned above, once a production has more money, cast and crew members deserve to be paid more, and the production values are expected to be higher. Web series allows people to be creative and make what they want with the people they have available, without having to answer to a production company or financial supporter, relieving them of pressure to produce work that could eventually be molded into a production for

a mainstream audience, changing the shows overall vision. Though the cost of producing web series can be low, and expectations for web series output is also lower than for other moving image media potentially lowering the cost even more than for a short film of a similar length, this does not mean that everyone can afford to make web series. Not only do filmmakers have to source the necessary technology, collaborators, and other resources like locations, props, and funding, they need to have the time to dedicate to a project. Even professional filmmakers live a precarious lifestyle that can include part time work, temporary contracts, and low or no paid work (Gironés, 2009; Kalleberg, 2009). They often have to support themselves in other ways, with other jobs, rely on family members or government support. This is a situation that many creative people and filmmakers in New Zealand experience. Creating web-series can be a full time (unpaid) job that has no guarantee of making any money, or even leading to future work, in fact, it is a job that people pay to train themselves to do, and then pay to do the work if they cannot find sufficient funding. Many people would find it difficult to participate in these kinds of projects due to having to spend their time working to cover living expenses such as a mortgage, rent, food, or a family to support.

One constraint that became clear in both interviews was that people's initial thoughts on what web series are were mostly negative. It is assumed if a filmmaker is involved in a web series, it is going to be amateurish and of low production value.

I think people go 'aww you're making a web series, how cool, how fun, is that just in your weekends?' It's like, no, fuck no, you know, I've spent three months writing, I've spent two weeks shooting, I've spent three months editing. It's the real deal and treating it like a profession and I think that really shows in the end product. But people, as soon as they hear it, they just have an assumption about what they are (Skilton, 2016).

A lot of under-informed viewers do not understand the amount of work that goes into creating a web series, and they do not see it as important or as impressive as making a film or television series. Many people believe a project is only good if it has a big name behind it funding the production. In part, this is because anyone can make them, so there are a lot of poor quality web series online that sometimes get more attention than the higher quality ones. Mendiola stated:

Because anyone can do it there's a lot of shit ones out there. A lot. You know, like, I would say 80% of web series that I've seen are pretty hard to watch, but that's just kind of the process of the people – I mean, if you put up the – some of the first projects I did, you know, it's cringe worthy too, but yeah, it's just that. That people can upload their very first thing they do and it's out there for the world to see. You know, when they can't just go hone their craft and get a bit better at that (Mendiola, 2016).

Many amateur filmmakers are now creating web series as a way to practice filmmaking, and uploading episodes without refining them first, which reinforces the idea that web series are only for amateurs who are trying to make their mark within the filmmaking world. Web series are a fantastic way to do that, but when there are so many people creating them, now is the time to refine ideas and make amateur and first time web series as good as possible with the resources available. With shows like *Auckland Love* and *The Misadventures of Suzy Boon*, the stigma behind web series is starting to break down, but this is a slow process, as many people still value television and film because of the higher production values.

If you tell people 'come watch, I'm having my web series premiere,' everyone's like ugh. It's gonna be shit. If you tell people 'come watch my TV premiere,' everyone's like woah! It still might be shit, but, you know, they tricked someone into giving them a budget so it can't be that bad. It's gone through some hoops to get there" (Mendiola, 2016). Something that is helping break the stigma of web series is that "companies are jumping onto web series now. So, people are looking at work, our work, and web series, as an opportunity for branding, as an opportunity to have their work represented in some way (Skilton, 2016).

Having bigger companies beginning to see the value in online entertainment brings a new audience with them, showing that web series are a media format where companies can capitalize on the audience and gain advertising revenue. With companies getting involved in web series, it can open new doors to sponsorship. By offering advertising opportunities, such as product placement, it gives companies incentive to offer financial support. Companies are getting more involved in this area as they are aware of how big the world of online audiences is. Their involvement may also change the production process as funds from

incoming sponsorship could alter the production values and working conditions, in that cast and crew could start to get a wage making it a viable career path.

One thing Skilton and Mendiola made very clear is they believe more people should get involved in creating web series. By increasing the amount of people interested in making web series, more funding may become available for the format. More funding may lead to higher production values, and an increased capacity for people to develop their skills, potentially changing the way people view web series. When asked if more people should get involved in this format, Skilton said:

Absolutely! And I think a lot of the time people will cut their plans short because they think something is not going to be good enough, or no one will watch it. Whatever. Some of the best web series are ones that are made from someone wanting to tell their story, kind of knowing who it's for. But really, just doing it. You know, and then it finds an audience (Skilton, 2016).

An alternative question would have been to ask “what do you think would attract people to become involved in web series,” or “what obstacles do you think stop people from becoming involved in web series?” Although, it is interesting to see current web series creators encourage more people to get involved.

Knowing your target audience for your web series can be beneficial, but it is not the most important thing. Web series have a unique way of finding an audience as they have a viral capacity and can spread over the internet through word of mouth. They do not need a production company to pick them up in order to gain an audience, but they do need to be available on websites, such as YouTube, Vimeo, and for New Zealand, the Web Series Channel. Mendiola had a similar reaction when asked if more people should get involved in web series.

Yeah, yeah, definitely. I mean, it's such a great medium to start off with, you know. And it's also still a great medium for like, you've been perusing a series idea for ages and you're like, you know what, no one in the TV industry is gonna take this, or you want to prove to people that this is a good show but no ones taking the chance to make it, so make a web

series. You know, it's a great calling card too. Show that you're capable of making a serial type of format for entertainment (Mendiola, 2016).

Web series creators have more freedom to experiment with styles and content to see what works and what does not. By creating web series, filmmakers can develop a body of work that is available for people to see and that demonstrates they are able to present a variety of ideas that are entertaining for viewers. Web series can help to develop new ways of presenting work, and discover forms of entertainment that cannot be showcased through the medium of film or television.

As web series do not tend to have many funding avenues, compromises have to be made, but according to Skilton, they should be welcomed. As with many creative ventures, compromises need to be made to meet deadlines or simply to get a project started. Skilton said all the compromises he has had to make to produce *Auckland Love* have been welcomed and he does not regret them, like not having a social life at night or on the weekends, and learning to live on the money he gets from acting jobs along with what he earns from the web series.

It's not a hobby for me. You know, some people do do it in their weekends, but this is my lifestyle. So, I call it my living. In my own way in what a living is. But it's my lifestyle now. It's to create work and to tell stories from our own point of view. It's kind of cool. Everything just fits in (Skilton, 2016).

He also stated that once you get really into producing a show, and really want it to succeed, your mentality and focus changes. So compromises made at the beginning of the process may not feel like compromises at the end. Mendiola also stated that he had to make many compromises, mostly around getting paid.

I guess you've got to factor in that you're not gonna get paid a lot. But you've got to put in a lot of time, but, if, you know, it could come up that the show that you're working on could be the jumping point for you to take the next point of your career (Mendiola, 2016).

Making these compromises can show a willingness to expend time and effort that may not be financially rewarding at the time, but shows how you want to see it succeed, even if success is not instant. This can be beneficial in the long run, as it

shows a work ethic and drive that can make a person attractive to work with, and can lead to the next step in your career, whether it be working on another web series, or moving into different areas, such as television, short films, or feature films.

3.3 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Throughout interviewing these four very different people, many insights were discovered. From the professionals I found out that compromises need to be made, constraints are what you make of them, and the various reasons as to why web series are becoming popular today. Seeing how Skilton and Mendiola approach web series as a profession allowed me to figure out how I feel about web series, and how I should go about creating my own. Interviewing the amateurs gave me insight to why people are willing to spend their time and energy on a project that has no financial incentive, and why doing work for fun and experience is important to people. Seeing how committed these two were to this project reinforced Mendiola's idea that knowing each other beforehand and enjoying being around each other is a good foundation to have when working on a low or no budget production (Mendiola, 2016). Interviewing this group of people gave me invaluable insights that aided me in the creation of *CTTV*.

CHAPTER 4: THE MAKING OF COMMUNITY THEATRE TV

The focus of this chapter will be to discuss my practical process of creating a web series, from pre-production through to production and post-production, and to see what constraints I faced throughout this project. This chapter is written in an autoethnographic style, deliberately changing the tone of the thesis to distinguish my personal practical experiences in this chapter from the other non-practical chapters. I have been asked multiple times why I would want to take on the challenge on writing, producing, and directing my own web series. As I am interested in how web series work, this seemed like the most appropriate way of discovering and researching this for myself. This job could have been made easier by simply watching various New Zealand based and international web series, acquiring interviews and analyzing what techniques were used that made web series unique and different from film and television. I decided that to learn as much as possible, experience would be the most beneficial way for me to do this. To go through the process and practice of making something for myself along with looking at other web series and obtaining interviews.

4.1 PRE-PRODUCTION

4.1.1 COMING UP WITH A NARRATIVE

Before anyone else came on board I was working alone, creating an idea for the web series. The reason why *CTTV* was chosen from a plethora of ideas was because it could be shot within the three weekends available for filming, and the set and props required for production were easily accessible. I decided to get a group of actors to brainstorm project ideas they thought were missing from our screens. During my conversations with a group of five actors, we developed the idea of *CTTV*, where a group of actors are stuck in a bad situation, but choose to ignore what is going on in their reality, and focus on putting on a production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The group were all so excited about it they said they would love to be part of it. So, not only did we come up with an idea, I acquired a cast.

4.1.2 SCRIPTWRITING

I planned a series of scripts that could be filmed within a short period of time. Most web series, such as *C.R.U.M.B.S* (Leighton, Evens, & Cooper, 2013), and *Awkward Black Girl* (Vanderpoort, 2011), go from as long as one minute to ten minutes. In Chapter Three, I created a list of codes and conventions I think encapsulate what web series are, and how I have used them throughout the making of *CTTV*. The codes and conventions used are: length, the use of a low budget appearance, and the use of comedy/parody, intertextuality, and web-specific transparent immediacy. I ultimately decided the *CTTV* narrative would be over five episodes (see appendix 1), with each episode between 5 and 10 minutes. This is because I believed this number would give me enough time to present a story without viewers losing focus or getting restless. A time limit of no more than 10 minutes is sufficient for an audience to get involved with the narrative without feeling as though they have to spend a lot of time committing to the storyline.

As I already had my core cast (see Fig 4.1.), I wrote specifically for the actors, incorporating their strengths and personalities, as opposed to writing characters they would have to adapt to. For example, after seeing cast member, Ben Moore,



Fig 4.1. *Community Theatre TV Core Cast* (Garson, 2017)

play Algernon Moncrieff in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, I knew he could portray an arrogant, self-important character well, so decided his character would

be controlling and egotistical. This is a stark contrast from actor Tom Carlyle's character, who is much more gentle and passive, not bragging about his achievements. I studied the actor's personalities and merged them with the characters to create people who the actors could portray well. This was important, as casting the wrong person as a character can quickly change the way the narrative unfolds.

Throughout *CTTV*, references are made to *Hamlet*, *The Lion King*, and various other musicals, with a musical number reminiscent of the opening song, 'The Circle of Life,' from Disney's *The Lion King*. Intertextuality was a very common technique used throughout the web series I analyzed, because audiences derive pleasure from seeing their favorite shows being quoted or referenced in other content (Fiske, 2013). They feel like they are sharing a personal joke between them and the writers. The audience members may also feel the director is treating them as an intelligent viewer, one who is part of a unique audience society who speak a similar language, and who understand similar cultural references. Taking this into account, I decided if I incorporated intertextuality throughout the series audiences would find it more amusing and respond more favorably.

Hypermediacy exists in *CTTV* as it is filmed in a mockumentary style and allows viewers to feel as though they are looking through a window of the characters' life. They feel as though they are experiencing the same situations the characters are experiencing, in a silent capacity. Also, not all of *CTTV*'s story is apparent to an audience at the beginning. The storyline develops over the course of the five episodes, revealing new information to the audience as they follow the characters' journey. The style of web series often emphasizes process and performance rather than a finished product, which may be in part due to the commonly used convention of a low-budget appearance, however, *CTTV* leans more towards the structural elements of transparent immediacy, making it more suitable for web than for other media.

The structural elements of transparent immediacy that exist in *CTTV* are that viewers are given a first-person perspective to the content they are viewing. The series follows a theatre group as they try to put on a production of *Hamlet* as a way to ignore their grim reality. It has a scripted, linear story line that unfolds chronologically, meaning it would be difficult for a viewer to start watching the

series halfway through and still follow the plot line. Viewers are definitely positioned as “silent viewers” looking in on the characters’ lives, though because it is shot in documentary style, the fourth wall is often broken as the characters talk to the camera. This makes the audience feel like they are interacting with the characters, partially removing them from their silent position, though of course the audience can not interact with the characters and do not have control over the storyline.

While making *CTTV* I discovered what is distinctive about a web series is a style of *web-specific transparent immediacy* (to coin a term), which utilizes characteristics such as: short length (usually 2-10 minutes), fragmented stories, often improvised, experienced by the audience as a true world, appearing unprofessional or low-budget, and easily accessible to an audience. The key aspect of web-specific transparent immediacy is that in a web series, the sense for an audience is that the web interface makes it very easy for viewers to access a form of entertainment that involves lessened official gate-keeping and fewer recognized conventions. But viewers have more interaction with the interface itself (the latter being hypermediacy).

4.1.3 CASTING

As the core cast was already chosen, I only needed to cast actors for the supporting roles. Due to my experiences with community theatre I know many local Waikato actors, as well as actors from Auckland. I posted a Facebook message asking if anyone was interested in helping make this series, with the caption ‘no money, but there will be food.’ Fortunately, many people were keen to be a part of the project and the lack of financial incentive did not bother them. In New Zealand, it is known to be difficult for actors to get paid work, especially if they are not in the regions where most paid acting jobs are, such as Auckland and Wellington. “Chances of getting work as an actor are poor because the performing arts industry in New Zealand is small” (Careers NZ, 2017, para. 3). Internationally, acting is a difficult career, even in places where the performing arts industry is larger and more importance is placed on it. New Zealand actor Bruce Hopkins explains:

The only fulltime job for an actor in New Zealand is to be core cast on Shortland Street. Those are the people making a decent living. For the rest of us, you may get a guest role on a show like *The Almighty Johnsons*, that might be two or three episodes, eight days work, and then you can't come back for two or three series (Gifford, 2012, para. 8).

Because of the difficulties getting paid work in New Zealand, it is important for aspiring actors to take film opportunities, even if they are unpaid student projects. It gives them the experience of being on a film set, and an idea of what to expect on larger scale productions with a larger budget. Due to new funding from New Zealand On Air, more productions are able to pay people for work on web series. The web series fund was created in 2013 in response to the growing popularity of online series (NZ On Air, 2013). As New Zealand On Air have acknowledged that web series popularity is on the rise, there appears to be more interest in creating them as a way for creators to get their stories and ideas to an audience. Although, while funding amounts for web series are still not as large as the funding for film and television, there is a growing group of people who are willing to volunteer their time to be part of web series productions. Often because they enjoy being on set, want some experience, or want to be part of a project that will be online forever (Davis, 2017).

4.1.4 SOURCING AND DIRECTING CREW

Finding crew members was more difficult, as I had to find people who were interested in film, were willing to work for nothing, and had knowledge of the technology we were using. The first two criteria were covered relatively easily, but the last one was considerably harder, however I managed to find a crew who were quick learners. Fiona Jackson came on board for a day to show my sound crew how to use the boom and Tascam sound recorder, and she also helped with the art department, showing them how to quickly and effectively work on set dressing. Sian Balvert and Kayla Belfield worked in the Art Department (see Fig 4.2.) and are naturally creative people who needed little direction. Each person in the crew had to wear multiple hats throughout the filming process. This means they may have been a designated photographer or sound person, but they also had to pitch in with the art department or location scouting, but that did not seem to overwhelm them. In New Zealand, performing multiple roles on set is common.



Fig 4.2. Sian Balvert and Kayla Belfield in the Art Department (Garson, 2017)

Joanna Mathers, a reporter for the New Zealand Herald, stated, "the number of jobs in the screen industry differs from the number of people employed, as people may hold multiple jobs within the industry." (Mathers, 2015, para. 4). In order to gain more work within the film and television industry in New Zealand, many people learn how to participate in various aspects of the filmmaking process, which allows them to take work as it comes up. "4900 people worked in the 12,600 jobs in 2013; an average of 2.6 jobs per person. The number of jobs for each person is an indication of the insecurity of the work" (Mathers, 2015, para. 5). As this type of work is well known for being insecure, being able to place yourself into multiple roles at any one time can be seen as a positive for the people who are hiring a production team or crew members.

Throughout the making of *CTTV*, there were two crew members in particular who each had three different roles. Balvert was in make-up, locations, and art department, while Davis was in art department, sound, and locations. Balvert said overall she really enjoyed being part of this production and she enjoyed that she did not have just one job. One of the issues with having such a small crew and having people involved with multiple roles as sometimes there was not enough time to get a job done. Davis discovered this when he found there was not always

a large amount of time to dress the sets. Davis said it was “fun getting involved with different aspects of the production, especially dressing the sets and location scouting. It would have been nice to be able to spend longer thinking about and dressing the sets and locations, but by nature of the shoot we didn’t have the time” (Davis, personal communication, February 10, 2017). Overall, they both found that in having to spread themselves out over multiple roles they gained insight as to what they could expect on a larger scale production.

4.1.5 FUNDING

After organizing everything for production, I needed to find a way to fund it. Although the cast and crew agreed to work for free, there were still some items that needed to be paid for, specifically food and drink, props, and set. Many people had said they would love to help out, but could not physically be part of production, so I decided to set up a Givealittle page. Givealittle is a New Zealand based crowdfunding platform that allows individuals, schools, businesses, and charities to ask for funding for all kinds of projects, and people can pledge to causes. Crowdfunding has become a funding alternative for productions that cannot get funding from traditional sources. As crowdfunding relies on individuals to pledge and donate money, ideas have to be presented in a way that appeals to an audience before that audience has even formed. For example, the web series RESET, a sci-fi series for children about a global environmental disaster, recently successfully funded their project. They asked for \$1,000, and ended up receiving \$1,135 (Givealittle, 2015). To get people interested in supporting their project they had a video explaining what the series would be about, along with a written description. Crowdfunding is already changing the way creative people can fund their work, giving them a chance to work on creative projects knowing there are people who are already backing them before their work is made. This is a very new area of funding, but one that could mean that creative people can find ways to thrive in a society where funding is not always available to them. I had pledged on many different film projects through Givealittle, and saw how successful they could be. My page was set up to run from June 15, 2016, to July 08, 2016, with production starting shortly after that. I predominantly targeted family and friends, whilst also sharing the page on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. I set the goal to \$500, an amount I thought we would have a chance at obtaining, as I am aware some

people do not always have faith in student run projects. There were 17 individual donors to the Givealittle page, with donations spanning from \$2 to \$100, and within 2 weeks we raised the \$500 we needed. Although this seemed to be a necessary process for me to go through, I hated the idea of asking people for money with the only promise being that a web series would be made. Thinking back on how I approached the use of crowdfunding, I would find ways to do it differently if I were to use it again. Some crowdfunding platforms allow you to offer rewards for people who pledge to donate a certain amount of money, which I would use if I were to fund another project. This also means there is the potential for more people to donate to projects, knowing they are going to get something in return for their financial support. The support I received demonstrated there are people in communities willing to support the arts financially in this way. Although crowdfunding is a good way for independent filmmakers to receive funding, this could mean that more traditional funders can begin to see crowdfunding as a replacement to the funding support that they could provide.

4.2 PRODUCTION

We filmed the series over two weekends, totaling four days. Originally, we were scheduled to film over three weekends, but production went a lot quicker than expected. The purpose of this practical experience was to find out what creative constraints might occur, the best ways to deal with them, and how these constraints effected the web series overall. On our first day of filming, I made sure all the cast and crew signed a release form (see appendix 2) stating they allowed me to use their image for anything that involves *CTTV*. If I did not do this, it could have potentially become an issue as at any point the actors or crew members could have decided that I could not use their work or their image for this project. There are a number of different constraints I expected to encounter while filming this web series. Many of these are similar to certain constraints experienced by other filmmakers. I expect these constraints to be on a smaller scale to what would be experienced on a film set, as filming a web series is a much different challenge to filming a feature film. Constraints such as limited funds, restricted time in which to film and edit, and a lack of technical knowledge are some of the limitations I expected to experience.

4.2.1 SCHEDULING

One aspect I believed to be very important throughout the production period was that the scheduling was tight and we would need to work quickly, as that was the only way I could see this web series coming together in the short time we had to create it. Otherwise it was possible actors and crew members would become frustrated with having to wait around because of disorganization. Schedules were sent to everyone in advance (see appendix 3) so actors were able to see what parts of the scripts they had to be familiar with on certain days. This also meant we were able to see how far ahead or behind schedule we were during shooting. This was important as we had a strict amount of days we were able to film, so needed to get everything done as scheduled. One scene needed to be filmed in the middle of the day, as after it was filmed all of the actors would be covered in glitter (see Fig 4.3.). After the glitter fight, everything else filmed from that point needed to be set after this scene. Nothing else set before the glitter fight could be filmed, as it would not make sense having the characters covered in glitter prior to the fight.



Fig 4.3. *Core Cast Covered in Glitter* (Garson, 2017)

4.3 POST-PRODUCTION

When editing began, it seemed like a huge task. Hours of footage to go through, sound files to match up to video files, and I was doing this all on my own. I had never edited anything like this before, and I had doubts that I would be able to do

it well as I had not used a video editor since my first year of university in 2013. I pushed through, and managed to roughly edit all 5 episodes in one week. It was fantastic to see all my hard work turn into a product I was proud to watch, even if it was just the rough cut. I decided that before I polished it, I would show it to some carefully chosen people to get feedback on the web series overall. They all seemed to laugh in the spots I intended, and even in some places I did not consider funny. This was reassuring, especially after watching it so many times I started to doubt myself, thinking this was not funny and that other people were not going to enjoy it. One consistent comment I received was that the pacing of the cutting and performance in episode one was not quite right, and that it got better as the episodes went on. I think the reason for this was that it was filmed in chronological order, and edited the same way. Which means episode one is where I was finding my bearings, both in filming it and in editing, which meant though episode one suffered, the others benefitted from my experience. At first this realization was worrying. It made me wonder if I needed to reshoot most of episode one, but then I remembered this is a learning curve for me, and I can forgive myself for this, even if others cannot.

Something else that proved difficult throughout post-production was sound. While editing, I discovered a lot of the sound recorded on the camera was fine to use in the final cut if it was shot inside, but the complete opposite if it was an outside scene. Episode three, scene eleven was very hard to put together. This scene was shot outside on a very windy day. Usually, the boom with the windbreaker on would be fine, but it was blowing so much that it made the sound unusable. I needed to choose between the lesser of two evils, the boom sound, or the camera sound. Both sounded like a tornado having a brawl with a hurricane, so it did not really matter which I chose. In discussions with people on how I could fix this problem, I came to the conclusion to change my character's situation, which, in turn, fixed my sound issues. It was suggested I change my characters from being stuck in the middle of a mystery apocalypse, to being in a war zone. That way, I am able to have a legitimate reason for the sound issues, and it actually ended up aiding my nearly empty soundscape. The only issue with changing this to a busier soundscape was that now the characters do not seem to be at all phased by what is going on in their environment. Although, looking back over their storyline, it is possible this is because the characters are used to what is going on, therefore do

not need to be worried the entire time. Through finding issues with my sound, I also found a way to fill up my soundscape with explosions, gunfire, and airplane sounds. Before this, my soundscape was lacking sound and felt empty, as though it had no atmosphere. Brad Verberne, creator of the title sequence music, offered to help fix my soundscape by creating more diegetic sound. This is a massive job for someone to take on, so I was very grateful he offered his time and expertise.

Originally, I expected post-production to take a couple of weeks, not a couple of months. I figured *CTTV* would be ready to hit the computer screens of viewers by October 2016, but it took approximately seven months to get five 10 minute episodes ready for screens. One of the reasons was because I had to rely on crew members, such as Brad, to work for free. This meant he had to fit my soundscape problems into his spare time. If I was able to give financial incentive for work to be done, I believe things would have progressed a lot faster.

4.4 CONSTRAINTS FACED

Throughout all three phases of creating *CTTV*, there were many constraints faced by myself, and other cast and crew members on set. We managed to all get through these without too many issues, but they definitely slowed us down and made our jobs more difficult than anticipated.

4.4.1 FUNDING AND TIME

The first two constraints of funding and time were faced straight away. I always knew there would be limited funds, and I would have to find ways around this. In some ways, this was not a completely negative thing, as it required me to come up with with creative solutions. I had written into the script that the theatre troupe had a strange bike generator they used to get power. In my mind, this was going to be easy to put together, then I realized the generator I had in mind was going to take more money to build than what available. So, I handed this task over to two members of my art department, Jackson and Davis, and they managed to create a machine that looked like a generator the characters might have made (see Fig 4.4.).



Fig 4.4. *The Bike Generator* (Garson, 2017)

Time was an issue, as I was sure we were going to need more than two weekends to film. I thought there was going to be no way we could get everything done. We had plenty of time to film everything that was planned, but if something was not planned then it was going to be forgotten altogether – a victim of this was the title sequence. I knew that this needed doing, but it was always got put on the backburner and then completely forgotten about. It was not until a week after filming was completed that I remembered this oversight, however, this meant I was able to think of a new title sequence, which ended up being better than the original idea and easier to create. All it took was one afternoon in a cast member's garage with some eyeliner and a minimal amount of artistic skill, and we filmed the title sequence. It felt like it belonged to this web series more than the original idea, so I decided to think of my lack of planning as a blessing in disguise.

4.4.2 CAST AND CREW AVAILABILITY

The availability of the cast and crew was another constraint. As I mentioned, they worked for free because they valued the experience more than the need for financial incentive. But this meant I had to work around their paid work and previous commitments. This ended up working satisfactorily, but we could only film on weekends, and not all the cast and crew could be there all the time. There were two cast members who had to drop out at the beginning due to work commitments and social engagements, so I had to make sure everyone was okay with missing out on work to be part of this project. Having crew members unable

to come every day did not pose too much of an issue as there were enough people willing to learn and take over any role. However, it was a lot harder when a cast member was unavailable or had to leave early.

4.4.2 TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

The last constraint we discovered was a lack of technical knowledge, which I knew from the start. I purchased a Canon EOS 70D to film on, but did not allow myself enough time to learn how to use it properly. I was learning how it worked as we were filming. I expected issues like this would arise, and could not do too much about them when we were on set. It did not seem to hinder the process too much, but it frustrated me that I did not know how to use this equipment proficiently, though over the course of filming I did learn how things worked, albeit a little bit late. The sound equipment also gave us some issues, but having Jackson on set really helped us as she has experience on many film and television sets. In particular, she was able to show the sound crew how the Tascam worked, and at what angle to hold the boom. Lastly, I had never used the editing software and did not know how. Because of the difficulty I was having with the software, I used a combination of Premiere Pro and iMovie. I used iMovie to edit my rough cuts together, and moved it to Premiere Pro so I could polish it. This solution worked well, as it meant I was able to edit the episodes faster and more efficiently.

4.5 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Overall, the collaborative process I used to create *CTTV* has been an amazing and challenging journey I am glad I went on. Being in charge of a project that is your own vision and having people want to be apart of it is a great feeling. I have always loved the idea of making films and creating my own content, involving friends and having a fun time making a product we can all say we were proud to be involved with. But, when asking people to work for free, and taking certain aspects home with them to complete in their own time, it became apparent to me that not everyone has the time to complete items in the time frame I would have liked, and if I wanted to share this experience with others, I needed to learn to adapt to what they can do, and when they can do it. I have learned so much in going through this process, like just how difficult it is to put a production

together. I can honestly say I enjoyed every part of it, even the learning curves that sent me into a panic at the time. I do not think I would work on this differently, even looking back at some of the mistakes and assumptions I made, because the collaborative aspect is what made the project successful. Without other people pitching in with their own ideas and creative flair, this web series would have been ‘just another student project’ as opposed to what it is now – a project incorporating the ideas of a creative family, where everyone’s contribution was valued. This collaborative aspect I discovered throughout working on this project is one key insight that came out of this practice-based research. I would describe the nature of this particular collaborative process as unpredictable due to the range of different people who were contributing to the project. I think having one clear vision for the overall product was important, so other contributors could see why things were being done the way they were. This meant many ideas from cast or crew fell into the same category as the original idea. In order for us to collaborate effectively, we all had to understand the end goal, and agree that this kind of work is important to make. Without this the entire collaborative process would have broken down, and it would end up being the vision of one individual, as opposed to many. I think knowing how interested this team was to make the project meant we were able to bring all our ideas to the table, and find the best ones from the group. One way this collaborative process is similar to those of a professional production is that Mendiola said one of the reasons why *The Misadventures of Suzy Boon* worked well was because “a lot of us had worked together before, and like, on that 48 Hours competition or other projects, short films, or TV pilots and stuff like that, we just really wanted to work together again” (Mendiola, personal communication, July 7, 2016). Having a previous relationship with cast and crew members was a good way for me to have a team willing to contribute and collaborate to make a web series that everyone was excited about.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This project revealed many insights surrounding the idea of web series, and what it is like to create one. These insights revolved around working for free on low budget productions, making compromises, how constraints can be approached, and a list of codes and conventions for web series. Throughout the process of making *CTTV*, it became apparent there were many different constraints over the course of filming and editing. As these constraints came up, creative solutions were required to get past them and ensure the project was completed. I was not the only person who needed to deal with the constraints though, as the team of people involved also worked to find solutions.

Overall, the scope of my research seemed to stay the same throughout the research and practical process. I focused on creating a watchable web series, whilst documenting the constraints I faced and how I best dealt with them. Using the interviews and the web series case studies I conducted, I was able to use that knowledge to my advantage when I encountered difficulties or unexpected events. The interviews allowed me to anticipate the kinds of constraints or challenges I might encounter while filming *CTTV*, which meant I was able to work through difficult tasks more quickly.

The methodological framework for this research was successful in guiding me toward answering my research questions. The practice-based approach I employed provided a strong background for the creation of my web series. Although there are various definitions for practice-based research, the definition Linda Candy provided helped me figure out what process I went through to successfully complete a practical element. Pairing practice-based research with the method of interviews and autoethnography was beneficial as it meant I was able to talk to professionals within the filmmaking community who are currently creating web series, and effectively record my experiences. This meant by the time I was ready to begin the filming process I had some perspective and advice from people who do this work on a regular basis. This was invaluable as I was able to anticipate some of the constraints I faced early on, and quickly rectify them.

The process of making *CTTV* and interviewing filmmakers directly contributed towards helping me answer my research questions.

- **What constraints do web series creators face, and how do they affect the creative process and output?**

The constraints I faced were lack of funding, lack of time, lack of technical knowledge, and cast and crew availability. The latter constraint was the only one I did not expect to be an issue; however, it became a frequent constraint.

Lack of funding was addressed by setting up a Givealittle page, which provided \$500 toward making *CTTV*, which was extremely beneficial. Another way I got around this particular constraint was by getting the cast and crew to agree to work for free. I would have preferred to be able to pay them, but because of the nature of this web series this was not possible. I also asked local businesses for sponsorship and this provided us with locations, lunches and snacks. Countdown gave sponsorship for food– Fieldmouse gave a building for free, as did Future Te Aroha.

Lack of time was an issue in part because some of the core cast were travelling to Te Aroha from Auckland, and also because I had to schedule shooting days around their other commitments (e.g. paid work, study, and family responsibilities). By completing the bulk of filming over two weekends I avoided scheduling conflicts and reduced the amount of time cast and crew were required to commit to the project. This meant we had to work quickly and efficiently during production, which I expected to be stressful, however, we completed filming ahead of schedule most days, so lack of time was not as big of a constraint as I expected.

Lack of technical knowledge became a larger constraint than I had expected. During the production process two of the sound crew and I had to learn how to use the Tascam sound recorder and the boom microphone. Though they picked up the skill quickly we still had technical issues with the sound that might have been avoided by professional sound operators. I was also learning how to use the camera while on set. This affected the creative output as the web series was filmed in chronological order, so it is obvious to me where I became more confident with the camera, and where I was learning to use it. Lack of technical knowledge was also a constraint during the editing process, where I found it difficult to learn how to use the editing software and complete the project within

the time frame of my Masters study. As I was unable to balance the sound I had to find a filmmaker who was competent at this task and rely on them to complete the work in their free time. This meant I was unable to stick to my own personal timeline, and had to work around their schedule.

The last constraint was cast and crew availability, which I did not initially think would be a constraint at all. There were many times during production where members of the cast and crew were unable to be on set for all or part of a day. For actors this meant I had to schedule on days when they were available, as a character cannot be replaced in a story. For crew it meant multiple people needed to be trained to do one job, and at times crew were to perform various tasks on set (e.g. set design and sound recording).

These constraints affected the creative process and creative output, in particular the lack of technical knowledge. My developing camera style meant there were many moments when certain shots had to be taken out of the web series, as they were out of focus, or not framed correctly. As I had to learn how to use the editing software the editing process took several months longer than anticipated, eight months as opposed to four months. The sound difficulties required a slight change in the story, as well as additional assistance towards the end of the project.

Though I am happy with my finished product, awareness of these constraints would have helped improve the web series, and this knowledge will help me in future film projects. The constraints faced throughout this project was similar to those faced by Louis Mendiola and Emmett Skilton, as they also had restricted filming times and budgets. They needed to come up with quick solutions in order to ensure the production ran as smoothly as possible.

- **Is there a style of structure and/or content specific to web series?**

Throughout examining web series that are already online, and through the process of making my own, I have found that there is a style of structure and content that is specific to web series. Web-specific transparent immediacy contains structural characteristics that is unique to web series. Such characteristics, as mentioned in section 4.1.2, include fragmented stories, easily accessible, and short in length, to name a few. Also, it allows audiences to access entertainment without traditional rules, and with different conventions that are not commonly seen within film and

television. I found that many web series are currently skewed toward the comedy genre, with many using intertextuality. Although there are web series online that fit into other genres, comedy seems to dominate within the web series community. I believe this is because using comedy as the genre makes web series even cheaper to create, as the use of low-budget camera techniques lends itself to adding comedic effect, and things like crew shadows and over-exposure can be forgiven, whereas there is less forgiveness in other genres. This is similar to that of reality television, and could be why it has come to dominate broadcast television as it is cheap to make and the poor production values can be forgiven. Also, intertextuality is an element that draws audiences in, as they are familiar with the references within the content.

Further research on the constraints faced while creating a web series, and how they are dealt with, is required to gain a greater understanding of what can happen. As this research is based on my experience as an amateur filmmaker, research into how constraints are dealt with by other web series creators on both professional and amateur sets would be beneficial. Upon reflection of my research process, it would have been ideal if I had been aware of the issues I was to face at the time of my interview process, as I would have been able to ask more detailed questions about constraints and potential solutions. Opportunities for future research could address the reality of making an income from web series, what kinds of people choose to make web series and for what reasons, and who does and does not watch web series.

Remediation, hypermediacy, and transparent immediacy are elements that can be seen within web series. Giving audiences a first-person perspective, along with a windowed, fragmented style of storytelling, these elements used together is what gives web series their unique feel, making them different to watching a television programme or film.

As a result of analyzing, creating, and researching web series, I have answered my key research questions: what constraints do web series creators face, and how do they affect the creative process and output, and is there a style of structure and/or content specific to web series? Throughout this process, I have gained a deeper understanding as to what web series are, and how they are distinguished from other media forms. Web series are a relatively new medium, and they are strongly

situated for expansion into a mainstream platform. Filmmakers are beginning to see the value in web series, and it will be interesting to see how web series evolves in the future.

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<http://webserieschannel.co.nz/webseries/the-adventures-of-suzy-boon/>

<http://webserieschannel.co.nz/webseries/auckland-love/>

Community Theatre TV:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCewEE_ZyjjomYufpuOnLkkg

APPENDIX 1

Community Theatre TV Scripts 1 – 5

Episode One – Pack In

Episode Two – Rehearsals

Episode Three – Advertising

Episode Four – Cast Bonding

Episode Five – Pack Out

Community Theatre TV - Pack In

Toni Garson

1 INT. THEATRE - DAY

Text: July, two thousand and something. It's cold, so we think it's July.

Text: The world appears to be ending. We think. No one else is really around.

A group of people are on a stage, doing different drama warm ups.

Arms are striking at the air, loud grunts are heard, and legs are jumping.

Text: An amateur documentary crew have been given special access to a tight knit theatre group during this rough time.

2 EXT. TOWN - DAY

Empty streets covered with cardboard signs that say things like, "THIS IS THE END," "GOOD LUCK SURVIVORS," and "THIS WAS A BAD TIME TO EXIST!"

Like a spy cam, a GIRL with bright red hair is seen running through the empty streets, followed by a bearded MAN holding a hockey stick with nails sticking out of it. They look panicked.

They go to turn a corner, slowly back up, and run the other way.

A little BOY comes out from around the corner. He looks up at the sky. Fear covering his face.

BOY

Oh. shit.

The camera begins to move backwards, shaking, like the camera person is running away from the danger the boy is seeing.

3 INT. THEATRE - DAY

JORDAN, a 20 something woman who owns the Community Theatre, is dressed in a flowy green play suit. She turns around to face the camera, and is eating a can of peaches. She puts the peaches down and clears her throat.

Text: Jordan, Theatre Owner

Jordan fumbles around with the lapel microphone. It makes

(CONTINUED)

a loud crackling sound.

JORDAN

What do I say?

FILMMAKER (O.S)

Don't touch the microphone. Say anything.

JORDAN

Test 1 2 3...

FILMMAKER (O.S)

Anything but that.

JORDAN

Uh, so, this is the theatre.
Lovely, isn't it? We do all kinds
of shows here.

Jordan begins to walk down some stairs, and points towards a wall full of pictures of past shows.

JORDAN

We've done shows like Joseph and
the Amazing Technicolour
Dreamcoat, Andrew Lloyd Webber is
a genius, don't you think? Uhh,
The Importance of Being Earnest,
Pirates of Penzance, The Vagina
Monologues... the list goes on.

As Jordan is talking, we see each show photo. We see that there is one man, Ben, who appears in all of them, occasionally with people in the background.

JORDAN

And if you come this way, you'll
see our stage.

Jordan moves down into the auditorium, and there is a person standing in a strange position right in the centre of the stage.

JORDAN (CONT.)

That's Ben. Yes, Ben is in all
our shows. Ben! Tell the nice
people why you love theatre.

BEN is on the stage doing Thai Chi, changing poses every so often. His eyes are closed. He is dressed in all

(CONTINUED)

black, with an empty coffee cup next to his feet. He has a sly, arrogant voice.

Text: Ben, Self Proclaimed Professional Actor

BEN

I love the theatre because I don't have to worry about any of MY problems. Just the characters.
(beat)
I'm busy right now. Getting ready for the 'auditions'. That's how you say it in the theatre world.

JORDAN

Uhh, yeah. We have all gone through a lot over the past few... I want to say... years?
(beat)
Oh, yes. The auditions. We are doing Hamlet. A timeless classic about... uhh... well, you know, it's Hamlet!

Oh, here's Laura. Laura! Look at the camera and tell them why you love this community theatre!

LAURA dressed in a light pink dress and a coat walks over to Jordan. She has a huge smile on her face. She has a sickly sweet sounding voice.

Text: Laura, Passive Agressive

LAURA

Oh, hi... Who's this?

JORDAN

They're going to film us! I told you about it a few days ago. Go on, tell them about the theatre.

Jordan smiles at the camera, and brings Laura forward.

LAURA

Oh, right. I like--

JORDAN

Love. She means love.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

I love this theatre because this is where I live now. Really. I sleep there.

Laura points towards a bunch of sleeping bags in a pile.

LAURA (CONT.)

Anyway, look what I found. It's the Hamlet script we've been looking for. It was in Ben's bag.

JORDAN

Ben's bag? Why were you in--

Enter TOM and RHI eating from a can of fruit. Tom is the guy everyone loves, and he knows it. He wears a button down shirt with a vest over top and jeans; he is very suave. He is also wearing a fedora.

Rhi is in jeans and a plain white shirt, with a black beanie. She has a very chilled out demeanour. No one in the group knows if Rhi is a male or female.

Text: Tom, Everyone Loves Him

TOM

Hey guys! Who's excited for the auditions aye? Hamlet! I like me some Hamlet.

Tom gives Rhi the can of fruit, looks into the camera, and starts to fix up his hair, smiling right down the lens.

Text: Rhi, Genderfluid

RHI

Yeah man. Should be good, right?

TOM AND RHI TALKING HEAD

Tom and Rhi are both holding the one can of fruit. Rhi is also holding a fork.

TOM

We've employed the buddy system here.

(CONTINUED)

RHI

Two people to every one can of food.

TOM

Two. People.

Tom stares at the camera, holding two fingers up. Rhi fishes out some fruit with her fork.

BACK TO SCENE

TOM

I was just telling Rhi about this one time I was in London and--

Tom and Rhi continue to walk past, and Laura joins them.

JORDAN

And that's Tom and Rhi. Everyone likes Tom. I think. And that's Rhi, he's pretty cool.

Lets get ready for the auditions!

Everyone heads up the stairs.

4 INT. THEATRE UPSTAIRS - DAY

Jordan, Tom, Laura, Rhi, and Ben are all sitting, facing the door.

There are various bottles of water in a group next to Laura. A stack of canned food is next to Tom.

Jordan is sitting in front of a barricaded door, with a big smile on her face. Laura is looking at her nails. Ben is still doing Thai Chi, and is trying to teach Rhi how to do a certain pose. Tom is rearranging the stack of canned food.

TALKING HEADS

1.

JORDAN

Our auditions don't seem to be as popular as they used to be. People will come though, they always come.

2.

(CONTINUED)

The stack of canned food is now in a different shape to what it was earlier.

TOM

Our shows are seriously on point.
Believe me. They remind me of
this show I saw when I was in New
York...

Tom cuts himself off, leans forward towards the camera,
and fixes his hair again.

3.

LAURA

Can you believe Ben taking that
Hamlet script? I can't believe
it. Hiding it in all his personal
stuff.

Laura holds the script up, and looks very unimpressed.
She lets out a small 'humph.'

4.

Rhi is holding the can of fruit from earlier.

RHI

I wonder who is going to direct
this show... Ben. It'll be Ben.

5.

BEN

I will direct this play. I have
vision. The others lack vision.

Ben sips at his empty coffee cup.

BACK TO SCENE

Everyone is still waiting for people to arrive. They are
staring in silence at the barricaded theatre door.

BEN

Well, looks like no one else is
coming. Look, lets just make this
simple. I'll direct.

Okay, casting. Looking back at

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

7

BEN (cont'd)
everyone's theatre past I think I
would be the best candidate for
Hamlet. Right. Let's start!

Tom looks disappointed, and everyone else lets out a
small 'I knew it' laugh.

LAURA
What about the other parts?

BEN
When I find where I put the
script, I'll let you know.

Laura glances over at the camera and smirks.

JORDAN TALKING HEAD

JORDAN
(sarcastic)
Yay.

END

Community Theatre TV - Rehearsal

Toni Garson

1 EXT. TOWN - DAY

Two MEN, dressed in camouflage gear are walking down the street, looking behind themselves every now and then.

There is a loud BANG, and they dive to the ground. They look at each other, and begin to army crawl.

Both men jump up, one falls backwards, while the other one runs away. The man who fell over gets up, and runs after the other.

2 INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jordan is standing in front of a bike that is connected to a box.

JORDAN

This is our generator. We've managed to store up to three years of energy in this!

MONTAGE OF THEATRE FOLK BIKING

1. Tom looks like he is struggling, but gives a thumbs up.

2. Laura just stares at the camera as she pedals, not looking happy.

3. Ben pedals with plenty of enthusiasm, smiling the entire time. He is holding his coffee cup.

4. Rhi half heartily pedals, stopping after 2 seconds.

5. Jordan looks determined as she bikes.

END MONTAGE

JORDAN

Three years of energy. I know, it's impressive.

Jordan moves to the stage. Rehearsals are starting. Everyone is in a circle, stretching and chatting to each other.

Ben makes a grand entrance by dramatically pushing the double doors open to the auditorium. He stands there, smirking.

The doors quickly begin to shut again as he didn't quite

(CONTINUED)

put enough force into them. He stops one of the doors with his hand, and makes his way into the circle.

TOM
Nice entrance.

Ben looks at the camera awkwardly, then quickly looks back at Tom.

BEN
Shut up, Tom.

LAURA
What's first? Are we going to start with scene one, or--

BEN
Name game.

LAURA
What?

BEN
Name game.

LAURA
But... we already know each oth-

BEN
I'm the director and I say we are starting with the name game.

TOM
Okay! I'll start.

Tom spins around, punches the air, and smiles at the camera.

TOM
Tom!

BEN
No. No! That's my move. Why would you take my move? Dammit, Tom.

Tom awkwardly glances at the camera, and shrugs.

JORDAN TALKING HEAD

(CONTINUED)

JORDAN

Ben doesn't really like it when
he doesn't get to go first.

Jordan turns to face the group in the background, with Ben storming off. She shrugs.

BACK TO SCENE

The group are sitting on the edge of the stage. Jordan takes a seat, and puts her hand on Rhi's knee.

Laura looks over and notices Jordan's hand. Her eyes narrow, and she becomes suspicious.

LAURA

Uhh... how do we get Ben back?

Rhi smiles, looks at Jordan, and stands up in front of everyone. She turns her head to face the doors.

RHI

(raised voice)

I nominate Tom to be our new
director.

Everyone looks at Tom. Tom stands up, looks at everyone, and smiles.

TOM

Oh, wow. Guys, thank you. You know how I've always wanted to try my hand at directing. Okay, I have a different vision for Hamlet, I want it to be like something I saw when I was in Milan and--

Everyone quickly faces the doors as they hear loud stamping from behind them.

BEN (O.S)

No!

Ben bursts back through the door holding an old, beat up script.

Tom sits back down again, sighing, and looking disappointed.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

No need for that. I just... I just had to go find the script. Someone moved it from my bag. Let's get on with it.

BEN TALKING HEAD

BEN

This is the only script we have. Some may say this is now useless, others say it's vintage.

Ben flicks through the script, and we see many pages are ripped or missing.

BEN (CONT.)

It doesn't matter though. I've seen the Disney version at least 6 times. You could say I'm quite the enthusiast.
(beat)
Where's my coffee cup?

FILMMAKER (O.S)

(whispers)
Shit. Get him his cup. Quick. His cup!

Ben's coffee cup gets thrown at him from off screen. It hits his shoulder.

BEN

(sarcastic)
Thanks.

MONTAGE OF ACTORS GETTING INTO COSTUME

1. Laura holding up her costume to her body, looking disappointed. It is a brown, baggy costumes with pieces of material hanging off it. She is a tree.
2. Tom looking confused trying to put part of his costume on. He is all twisted up in the material. We can't tell what it is.
3. Rhi happily putting on her costume, it is a full African styled garb.
4. Ben striking various power poses, holding his coffee

(CONTINUED)

cup up like Hamlet holding a skull. He has traditional garb.

5. Jordan looking around for her costume, unable to find one.

6. Tom still looking confused with his costume. He is now tangled in a different position, sitting on the floor.

TOM

Help...?

END MONTAGE

Everyone is on stage either in full costume or in partial costume. Jordan doesn't have a costume yet and looks worried.

JORDAN

Ben, I don't mean to be a pain,
but I don't have a costume.

Ben is silently practicing his lines. It looks like he is doing some kind of strange interpretive dance.

BEN

You'll get one.

Tom puts his hand up, half dressed in his costume.

BEN

Figure it out, Tom.

Tom slowly lowers his hand and stumbles over trying to dress himself.

BEN

Alright, places everyone,
annnnnd...

Everyone quickly gets into position. Ben stands in the middle of the stage, still holding his coffee cup. The others gather around him in a circle.

BEN

ACTION!

EVERYONE

(singing in the mode of
'The Lion King')
Wants ingonyama to be or not to
be, that is the question!

(CONTINUED)

As the beginning is being sung, Ben raises the coffee cup. He quickly waves his hands and shakes his head.

BEN

No, no! Cut! Cut! That's not the energy I need. I need MORE. Go take a moment for yourselves, and find me more energy!

BEN TALKING HEAD

He looks frustrated.

BEN

I'm really only doing this show so I can spend time with Rhi. She keep me sane.

JORDAN TALKING HEAD

JORDAN

I don't particularly like working with Ben, but Rhi does. I like spending as much time with him as I can.

RHI TALKING HEAD

RHI

Yeah, I'm with both of them. They both have their advantages.

Rhi leaves the room, only to reveal that Laura had been listening in the background. She looks happily shocked. Think Chris Pratt in Parks and Rec.

LAURA TALKING HEAD

Laura takes a moment to digest what she just heard.

LAURA

Leverage. It's like Christmas has come early!

BACK TO SCENE

Laura walks towards Tom holding a bottle of water. She opens it and begins drinking.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

I wish we had coconut water.

Everyone else starts to come back to the stage area. Ben comes back with a list.

JORDAN

I hope you're sharing that water with everyone.

Laura passes the bottle to Jordan, who takes a drink.

BEN

When you act, you need to know what practitioners you're drawing your inspiration from.

An audible groan is heard from everyone.

BEN (CONT.)

Are you drawing it from Stanislavsky, Grotowski, Brecht, or Checkov?

TOM

Stanislavsky is the one who did 'The Importance of Being Earnest,' right?

BEN

No, Tom, that was Oscar Wilde. Completely different people.

TOM

I think you'll find it was Stanislavsky.

BEN

Shut up, Tom.

As Ben continues to list off different practitioners and theatre forms, the rest of the cast start to leave the auditorium one by one.

BEN (CONT.)

Or are you getting it from Poor Theatre, Epic Theatre, Myerhold, Lecoq? Guys? Come on guys, this is valuable stuff I'm giving you here.

(CONTINUED)

JORDAN TALKING HEAD

Jordan is holding a shotgun.

JORDAN

This is our one weapon we have.
And I know exactly who I would
like to use it on.

Jordan glances over at Ben who is holding his coffee cup on stage. He is doing a strange theatre warm up where he shakes his body and makes loud, absurd noises.

JORDAN (CONT.)

But no, I'm not throwing away my
shot. We only have one bullet
left because Ben got mad at the
lighting guy last year.
(beat)
He had it coming.

END

Community Theatre TV - Advertising

Toni Garson

1 INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DAY

An unidentified group of 7 (the survivors) is getting ready to move. They are a second lot of survivors who need to relocate.

FILMMAKER (O.S)
...soooo.... we need to film you.

TEAGAN
Why?

FILMMAKER (O.S)
Because if the theatre group dies, we can't finish our documentary.

TEAGAN
Who?

FILMMAKER (O.S)
(whisper)
Ahh shit. Should not have said that.

GETTING READY MONTAGE

1. Putting a camouflage style jacket on
2. Putting shoes on
3. Picking up knives, guns, a set of nunchucks and a hockey stick
4. Putting on war paint

BAILEE, the leader of the survivors group, steps forward toward the camera. She has bright red hair, and is wearing camouflage clothing. She looks unkept and dirty.

BAILEE
Let's do this.

BAILEE TALKING HEAD

Text: Bailee, Survival Leader

Bailee has a set of nunchucks hanging over her shoulder, which she grips with one hand as she speaks.

(CONTINUED)

BAILEE

Someone left the door open the other day, so we have to move now.

She glances over at JONATHAN, who is zipping up a bag.

END MONTAGE

BACK TO SCENE

CHRIS looks up from his bag. He is also wearing camouflage clothing which is dirty.

CHRIS

Uhh... do what?

SHAUNA, Bailee's second in charge, hits Chris across the shoulder.

SHAUNA

Move. C'mon Chris. You need to listen when we speak.

Chris walks over to Jonathan, who is putting on his shoes.

Text: Chris, Doesn't Pay Attention

CHRIS

I do. Where are we moving to?

JONATHAN

I'd also like to know this.

TEAGAN lets out an angry sigh. She has a temper problem. She has a gun and points it towards Jonathan.

TEAGAN

Are you serious?
(mumbles)
Fucking useless, pain in the ass...

JONATHAN

What?

TEAGAN

Nothing! Go get your damn water.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

Do they know what we're doing?

Jonathan points towards the camera, and the camera shakes in a 'yes' motion.

BAILEE, SHAUNA, AND TEAGAN TALKING HEAD

Text: Shauna, Second In Charge

Text: Teagan, Has a Temper

TEAGAN

Stupid.

The girls look frustrated and shake their heads.

BACK TO SCENE

JONATHAN

You know how you spent ages getting us this camo gear?

BAILEE

Yeah. Almost cost me my life!

JONATHAN

You know it's really only good in the forest, right?

BAILEE

Is that a complaint?

JONATHAN

No, not at all.

Jonathan looks over at Chris, and they both smile.

CHRIS

Do you know how camo works?

BAILEE

Do I look stupid?

CHRIS

No, no. It's just that... well, your hair is really bright.

JONATHAN

Really bright.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

It's like a beacon. Everyone can see us.

BAILEE

Yeah, well, what do you want me to do about it, aye?! It's not like I can just go to a hairdresser and get them to dye it for me!

JONATHAN

No need to be so aggressive.

Bailee glares at Jonathan, looks at the camera, and storms off.

Teagan shakes her head at Jonathan and Chris.

TEAGAN

Stupid.

BAILEE TALKING HEAD

BAILEE

I know how cameo works. But, when I was getting the gear, I broke into a hairdressers too. Took their red hair dye and some shampoo, mixed it together.
(beat)
I do wash sometimes, you know!

Bailee shows her open backpack, which has three shampoo bottles.

BAILEE (CONT.)

I like my hair okay, geez.

2 INT. THEATRE ART ROOM - DAY

The theatre folk are all in the Community Theatre's Art Room. They are sitting around a long table, with different coloured paper in front of them, along with other art's and craft's things.

BEN TALKING HEAD

(CONTINUED)

BEN

There's a lot to do. A lot. I can't do this all by myself, you know. There's rehearsing, directing, costumes, props.... Advertising. Shit. I've forgotten to advertise. This is why you need to delegate!
(beat)
Where's my coffee cup?!

BACK TO SCENE

LAURA

Ben has put me in charge of advertising, so what better way than to make the posters ourselves!

RHI

Instead of rehearsing?

LAURA

Yeah! Today is poster day!

TOM

Let's do this!

3 INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DAY

The survivors start packing their bags, with what little resources they have left.

Jonathan goes to pick up one of the last bottles of water, at the same time PAGNA does. Pagna is Cambodian, and he wears a bandana around his forehead.

They stare at each other, both holding the bottle.

JONATHAN

I had it first.

Text: Pagna, Plays the Race Card

PAGNA

If you don't give it to me, you're a racist.

BAILEE

Don't be a dick, Pagna.

(CONTINUED)

Text: Robin, Intimidating

ROBIN, an intimidating looking man with a beard, comes up behind Pagna with his hockey stick. He stares at the camera.

Pagna looks up at Robin, sighs, and lets go of the bottle.

JONATHAN TALKING HEAD**Text: Jonathan, Somehow Survived**

Jonathan looks at the camera, smiles, and takes a big gulp of water.

JONATHAN

Mmmmm.

He begins to choke on it and coughs. He stares at the camera for a moment after his coughing fit, and quickly leaves.

4 INT. THEATRE ART ROOM - AFTERNOON

Everyone is enjoying making their posters. The room is full of laughter and smiles. Laura walks over to Rhi.

LAURA

You hang out with Tom a lot,
right?

Rhi doesn't look up from her poster, which she is clearly enjoying making.

RHI

Yeah.

LAURA

Does he ever say anything about
me?

RHI

Nope.

LAURA

I think you should get him to
hang out with me more...

Rhi looks up, more interested in what Laura has to say.

(CONTINUED)

RHI
You like him?

LAURA
I didn't say that.

RHI
Why would I help you?

LAURA
Because I know you're dating
Jordan and Ben. You don't want
them to find out, right?

Rhi's eyes narrow. She looks down at the glitter on the table.

RHI
You don't want to bring that up.
Not in the situation we're in.
You don't want to destroy this
group. You wouldn't.

LAURA
I would.

5 EXT. STREETS - AFTERNOON

The survivors are walking cautiously down the street in a group, with Robin walking a few paces behind swinging his hockey stick around. He looks calmer than the rest.

Bailee looks in a window, and shakes her head at the group. They keep moving.

6 INT. THEATRE ART ROOM - AFTERNOON

Rhi is staring at Laura. Laura is smiling at Rhi, with a 'What are you going to do about it?' kind of smile.

RHI
You bitch.

Rhi throws a fist full of glitter at Laura, and Laura retaliates and picks up a pile of glitter, turns around and goes to throw it at Rhi, but Rhi has moved.

Laura ends up throwing it at Tom.

Everyone else thinks this is a fun game, and joins in. People are ducking underneath tables and throwing glitter everywhere.

(CONTINUED)

Laura and Rhi circle each other clicking their fingers, like in West Side Story, staring angrily at each other, as glitter flies past them.

7 EXT. STREETS - EVENING

Bailee, Shauna, and Teagan are at the front of the group, while the guys are a few steps behind.

TEAGAN

Honestly, I don't know why we put up with them.

Teagan takes a drink from her water bottle, then passes it to Shauna.

BAILEE

Safety in numbers.

SHAUNA

At least we don't have to carry anything.

8 INT. THEATRE ART ROOM - EVENING

Everyone is standing in a line, covered in glitter, proudly holding up their posters. Rhi isn't smiling.

Laura is walking up and down the line, examining the posters, like a military sergeant. Rhi's is clearly the best, while Tom's is clearly the worst.

Tom's poster has a stick person holding a sword, with Hamlet written on it, with specs of glitter covering the empty spaces.

Laura stands straight, and speaks like she is giving a military mission.

LAURA

Jordan, I like your use of coloured pencil. Love the glitter work on both Tom and Ben's posters. Rhi, at least you tried.

Everyone, except Rhi, begins to look nervous, hoping that their poster gets chosen.

LAURA

We'll use Tom's poster.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
Tom's one?!

RHI
So, we are putting up one poster?
Just one?

LAURA
Yes. Yes we are.

RHI
Tom's one? I mean, look at it. No
offence buddy, but... that's no
Van Gogh.

TOM
That's okay. Everyone has
different artistic opinions. You
know, this would probably be
quite popular in Barcelona. I was
there once and--

Ben starts screwing up his poster.

BEN
(mumbling)
Of course she picked his one.
(beat)
Fine. Who's going out to put it
up?

Everyone avoids eye contact with Ben, looking up at the
ceiling, at the floor, or at the walls.

Ben gets a huge grin on his face.

BEN
Pow it is.

Everyone stares at Ben, clearly very worried. Laura loses
her military sergeant demeanour.

9 EXT. STREETS - EVENING

The guys are still slightly behind the girls. They are
carrying all of the bags the group has. Pagna sighs and
starts dragging a bag.

PAGNA
Why do we have to carry
everything?

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN
Stop complaining.

CHRIS
Stop arguing.

JONATHAN
(Mocking Chris)
Stop arguing

CHRIS
(Mocking Jonathan)
Stop complaining.

PAGNA
Damn you guys are like an old
married couple. Sorry I said
anything!

Robin hits his hockey stick hard on the ground, shutting
them up and speeding them up.

10 INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - EVENING

Everyone is in a circle. They have their hands up like
guns, knees bent, and have their serious faces on.

They are looking around at each other, waiting for Ben to
shout out the first name.

BEN
Everyone ready?

Silent nods.

BEN
Okay, 1... 2... Tom!

JORDAN AND RHI
POW!

Tom ducks, but is too late. He has been 'shot.'

TOM
Shit!

BEN
Tom.

11 EXT. STREETS - EVENING

Tom peeks out from behind the corner of a building. He takes a few steps out, and tugs on a rope that is tied around his waist.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

I'm going to die. This is it.
This is how I go.

BACK TO SCENE

Tom creeps down the street towards a shop window. The others peek out from around the corner of the building, before taking a few steps out in a tight group, holding the end of Tom's rope.

Tom takes a few more steps forward, and tugs on the rope. He turns around to see the group, who tug back, and continues moving towards the shop window.

LAURA

(whispering)

Did you talk to Tom about me yet?

RHI

Not the time, Laura.

LAURA

But did you?

RHI

No. Shut up.

BEN

Didn't we pick one person to do
this so we didn't all have to be
here?

Robin comes around a corner, and sees Tom. Quickly, he moves behind it, and watches what is going on.

Tom gets to the shop window. A loud BANG is heard and he, and the rest of the group, freezes.

Robin looks around, his hockey stick held high.

Tom puts the poster on the window and tugs his rope. It has gone limp.

(CONTINUED)

He turns around and sees the rest of the group running away, back to the theatre.

Robin runs back to his group.

Tom begins to run after the group, with the rope following behind him.

TOM

Guys! guys!

12

INT. THEATRE - EVENING

Everyone is lying on the floor, breathing heavily.

Tom runs in through the doors, and just looks at them, out of breath. He is leaning against the barricade.

TOM TALKING HEAD

TOM

Assholes.

END

Community Theatre TV - Cast Bonding

Toni Garson

1 INT. STAGE - EVENING

Ben is on stage, moving boxes around for set. Everyone is in their costumes. Tom, Jordan, and Rhi are practicing their lines. Tom has an open can of fruit in his hand. Laura is swaying like a tree in the background.

JORDAN

You deliberately disobeyed me.

TOM

This above all: to thine own self
be true.

RHI

Though this be madness, yet there
is method in't.

JORDAN

Run, run away and never return!

Laura quickly runs forward, and pushes past Rhi.

LAURA

One may smile, and smile, and be
a villain!

JORDAN

Laura, you're a tree. You don't
speak.

TOM

Were those lines in order? I'm
not sure they were in order.

BEN

Just go from the top.

Everyone rearranges themselves on stage. Laura goes back to swaying like a tree.

JORDAN, LAURA, TOM, RHI

(singing badly)

To be or not to be, that is the
question!

BEN

(frustrated)

If I don't have my coffee
break...

(CONTINUED)

A loud screeching sound is heard, followed by a BANG, and everyone freezes. Nobody moves, or breathes.

A second BANG is heard, sounding like it is getting closer.

FILMMAKERS (O.S)
(whispers)
What the fuck was that?

JORDAN
If we could just calmly head
downstairs...

FILMMAKERS (O.S)
Run! Run!

Everyone bolts towards the back of the stage, down a set of stairs, and disappears under the building.

2 INT. UNDERNEATH THE BUILDING - EVENING

Underneath the building, we see a group of chairs already in a circle, with a bong, pipe, and big stash of weed next to them.

Everyone grabs a seat in the 'That 70's Show' style circle.

Jordan picks up the pipe, packs it, and takes a puff.

JORDAN
This is better. Safer.

Jordan passes the pipe to Rhi. Rhi takes a puff.

RHI
Much better.

Rhi passes the pipe to Ben. Ben takes a puff.

BEN
Wonder what that sound was.

Ben passes it to Tom. Tom takes a puff.

TOM
Let's all thank Jordan for her
stash.

Tom passes the pipe to Laura. Laura takes a puff.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

Here, here!

The pipe gets passed around the group again.

JORDAN

What do you think is happening outside?

RHI

What do you think is happening in the world?

BEN

Thou shalt wonder what is happening in space right now?

TOM

You know, if you think about it, God is, like, the Poseidon of space.

LAURA

Guys, what if this is it? What if this is the world ending.

The pipe gets passed around again.

JORDAN

Guys, Laura got stoned again!

RHI

How big would you say space is?

BEN

I don't know... I mean, it can't just end, right?

TOM

And if it does end, there has to be something beyond that, aye? But if there is, what is it? There can't just be nothing!

LAURA

Why are we not talking about this? I actually think the world is ending. We haven't seen anyone else in weeks.

LAURA TALKING HEAD

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

They aren't listening to me. We are going to die. All of us. You, me, them! This is the end.

(beat)

Unless... we all move to space. It's so big. There must be somewhere we could go!

(beat)

No, no. This is it.

BACK TO SCENE

TOM

I was recently in Amsterdam, and--

Ben starts rocking side to side in his chair, looking worried.

BEN

Guys, is there an earthquake, or is it just me?

TOM

Man, I'm eating these so slowly.

Tom slowly puts some fruit to his mouth, extending his neck to try reach it.

BEN

I need confirmation here! Is there an earthquake or is it me?

TOM

My mouth hurts. The sweetness hurts my teeth. I can feel the sugar in my fillings!

BEN

Woah. Slow motion.

JORDAN

If you think about it you're always tasting yourself with your tongue.

RHI

Which was made even better with mums brownies.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Shit yeah! Your mums brownies
were the best.

RHI

Yeah... they were.

TOM

I could really go for a brownie
right now.

JORDAN

We could all go for a brownie
right now.

Everyone is silent for a moment, and looks at the ground.

JORDAN

Who wants another round?!

Everyone perks back up and Jordan passes the pipe around.

3 EXT. STREETS - EVENING

The survivors are peeking around the corner where Robin
saw the theatre folk. He points down the street.

4 INT. DOWNSTAIRS - EVENING - LATER

Laura is holding the pipe, staring into space. She begins
to giggle.

LAURA TALKING HEAD

LAURA

Have you ever noticed how cute
Tom is?

She sees Tom walking past her, off screen.

LAURA (CONT.)

Tom! Tom! Come here! This is Tom
and he is really cute.

Laura grabs Tom and puts her arm around him.

TOM

Aww, Laura. You're making me all
embarrassed and stuff.

Tom puts his fedora on Laura's head. He looks down the
camera, and fixes his hair, but doesn't do a very good

(CONTINUED)

job of it.

LAURA

You're really cute and I probably, possibly, very much love you.

Tom stares at the camera, wide eyed. A little shocked.

Laura slowly looks at the camera, her smile fading to an awkward half smile, her arm lowering from Tom's shoulder.

Tom takes back his fedora.

BACK TO SCENE

Tom is now holding the pipe, and he tries to avoid eye contact with Laura.

Rhi watches what is going on and begins laughing.

Both Jordan and Ben go to grab each of Rhi's hands. She looks at them both, and smiles.

RHI TALKING HEAD

RHI

It's just that... I have so much love in my heart, it needs to be spread around!

Jordan and Ben walk in to frame. They're both smiling, and try to hug Rhi at the same time.

JORDAN AND BEN

What are you doing?

BEN

She's my girlfriend.

JORDAN

Uh, he's my boyfriend!

FILMMAKERS (O.S)

Oh shit! Oh snap! Oh dang! It happened! Awkward! (add lib.)

Jordan and Ben both look at Rhi, clearly confused and upset. Rhi looks at the camera and shrugs.

BACK TO SCENE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

7

Everyone has fallen asleep in a cuddle pile in the middle of the chair circle.

END

Community Theatre TV - Opening and Pack Out

Toni Garson

1

EXT. STREET - DAY

The survivors are walking down the street, towards the window where Tom put up the poster. Chris and Jonathan notice the poster and run towards it.

Chris sniffs it, and Jonathan touches it with one finger.

CHRIS

It hasn't been here very long.

JONATHAN

No, the glue is still wet.

Pagna walks towards them, and examines the poster.

PAGNA

Hamlet! That's the one where the father dies and comes back as a ghost for a bit, aye? With the lions?

BAILEE

Sure...

PAGNA

That's my favourite Disney show!
Can we go see it?

BAILEE

No. Look, we need to find shelter. There must be something near this theatre. Ugh. I hate theatres.

JONATHAN

I bet if we follow the glitter we'll find it.

Jonathan looks at the camera, feeling very pleased with himself.

Chris and Pagna jump in the air, in front of Jonathan, and do a high five.

CHRIS AND PAGNA

Huzzah!

TEAGAN

Shh!

Chris and Pagna repeat the action, but a lot smaller. A

(CONTINUED)

tiny jump and a finger high five.

CHRIS AND PAGNA
(whispers)

Huzzah!

2 INT. THEATRE - DAY

The theatre folk are all in costume, getting ready for the show. They are doing various voice warm ups and physical warm ups.

Rhi tries to talk to Ben, but he shrugs her off. She goes to sit down next to Laura, who is also looking glum.

LAURA
I'm never getting stoned again.

RHI
Yip.

BEN TALKING HEAD

The Filmmaker is framing up the shot of Ben. The camera is zooming in and out, shaking a little.

FILMMAKER (O.S)
Just a little to the left.

Ben looks nervous. He moves to the left.

FILMMAKER (O.S)
Too far. A step to the right...
Perfect.

BEN
Final dress rehearsal. Opening tomorrow. I'm not nervous. The show is going to be great. Really. The cast are all getting along so well right now.

BACK TO SCENE

There's banging at the door, and everyone stops what they are doing, confused. They look around at each other, and slowly begin to move towards the knocking.

As they get upstairs, they see a group of people, all dressed in camouflage.

Laura pushes Jordan forward, and she hesitates for a

(CONTINUED)

moment before talking. They are all quite shocked to actually see other people.

JORDAN

Uhh... hi? Umm... are you here to see the show?

Pagna gets excited and goes to speak, but he is stopped by Shauna.

BAILEE

No. We need shelter. Let us in.

JORDAN

Oh, sorry. We can't let you in unless you're here to see the show.

TEAGAN

Let us in! You let them in! Why would you let them in?!

Teagan points directly at the camera.

BEN

Can't. Not unless you're here to see the show. They're making a documentary on us. They get to go where they like.

JONATHAN

C'mon, man! You don't understand what it's like out here!

TOM

It's the final dress tonight, so you'd get in for free.

Pagna has a moment of realisation, pushes Jonathan and Teagan out of the way, and gets excited again.

PAGNA

Yes! We're here to see the show!

The rest of the survivors look angrily at Pagna, Robin raises his hockey stick.

The theatre folk all begin to smile and get excited about the idea of having an audience.

(CONTINUED)

JORDAN

Oh, in that case, come on in!

Jordan gets a key out, and unlocks the door and pushes it outwards, away from the barricade.

JORDAN

Guys... why is this barricaded when the door opens this way?

LAURA

Aesthetics.

The theatre folk rush downstairs quickly to get ready for the show. Jordan and Tom stay upstairs to properly greet their guests, who are cautiously walking in.

JORDAN

Tea, coffee? Biscuits?

Tom is in the background quickly covering the stacked cans of food with some material. The survivors all look very happy when they hear the food offer, only to quickly be disappointed when Jordan says...

JORDAN (CONT.)

Well, we don't actually have any of this. We have cups though. You can just hold them if you like, it has the same effect.

Everyone groans quietly, and start to head downstairs. Jordan quickly stops them and pulls out a bucket with a big sign that says 'WEAPONS BUCKET.'

JORDAN (CONT.)

Sorry, before you enjoy the show, you have to put your weapons in here. It's policy.

BAILEE

No. I'm not giving you my only protection!

JORDAN

Then you and your group have to leave.

Bailee looks at the rest of her group. She sighs and puts her weapon in the bucket and heads downstairs to the auditorium. Everyone else does the same.

3 INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

Six chairs are in the large audience area, with many other chairs covered by material. Robin doesn't get a seat and has to sit on the floor.

BEN TALKING HEAD

BEN

Opening night it is then...

Ben walks to the rest of the cast who are in a group behind him, doing warm ups. As he leaves he shakes his body and yells...

BEN

Bah! Bah!

BACK TO SCENE

Jordan walks onto the stage.

JORDAN

Hello, and welcome to tonight's performance of Hamlet. Just a few housekeeping rules first. Toilets are just there, and one down the back. Not that they work. Fire exits are down the back, through this door, and at the back of the stage. Although, we won't actually be using them as they are all barricaded up to keep us safe.

The survivors just stare at Jordan, blankly.

JORDAN (CONT.)

Oh, before we start, if I could just get someone to jump on the bike for the duration of the show, that would be fantastic. It's our generator.

The survivors look at each other, very confused.

JORDAN (CONT.)

Well, do you want lights for the show or not?! You, bearded man, on your bike.

(CONTINUED)

Robin slowly stands up, and walks towards the bike. He gets on and begins to pedal.

JORDAN (CONT.)

Thanks, man. Keep that pace up for the show and there shouldn't be any problems.

Robin does not look impressed, but pedals anyway.

The show begins. Jordan opens the curtains, which get stuck half way through. She runs on stage and shakes them, then runs off and continues to open them. Jordan runs to the rest of the cast in their opening positions.

Ben stands on a box in the middle, and the rest of the cast gather around him.

CAST OF HAMLET

Wants ingonyama to be or not to be, that is the question!

The survivors look very confused in their seats.

Pagna looks distressed.

SHAUNA TALKING HEAD

SHAUNA

I have no idea what's going on. I don't know what I'm watching.

BACK TO SCENE

The cast are now wearing feather boas and are in a kick line. The kick line is not in sync. Ben steps forward and does a shimmy.

PAGNA TALKING HEAD

PAGNA

This isn't what happened in the Disney version...

BACK TO SCENE

Laura, Tom, and Rhi are on stage on their knees. They are all holding prop knives.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Die!

LAURA

Die!

RHI

You said you'd be there for me!

Rhi gets up and runs off stage.

JONATHAN TALKING HEAD

Jonathan wipes a tear from his eye.

JONATHAN

I really understand the message
in this show. This is what real
art is.

BACK TO SCENE

Ben is on stage banging the stage with his fists.

BEN

Why?! Why God, why?!

Jordan and Rhi are doing an interpretive dance behind
him, waving silk scarves around.

BAILEE TALKING HEAD

BAILEE

What the fuck is this?

BACK TO SCENE

The cast all get back on stage in a line, and take their
final bows. The survivors slowly begin to clap, forcing
smiles, but mostly looking confused.

Jonathan is the only one clapping with enthusiasm.

CHRIS AND TEAGAN TALKING HEAD

CHRIS

I can't say I was 100% paying
attention.

(CONTINUED)

TEAGAN

I didn't understand this piece of
shit show. It was terrible.

ROBIN TALKING HEAD

Robin just stands there intimidatingly, and stares
directly at the camera. Sweat is covering his face. He
doesn't move, or blink.

BACK TO SCENE

The survivors stand in a group, quietly talking about
what they have seen. Jordan walks towards them with a big
smile on her face.

JORDAN

Did you enjoy the show? It was so
good to have an audience tonight!
Thank you so much!

She gives Shauna a hug, who looks very distressed and
awkward.

BEN

Thanks for coming guys, we're
closing up for the night, so
you've got to go. Hope you
enjoyed it!

BAILEE

Leave? We're not leaving. We
didn't sit through that just for
fun.

BEN

As the director, that hurts me.

CHRIS

We thought maybe we could sleep
here tonight?

JORDAN

Oh, no no. This is not a
babysitting service.

Bailee takes great offence to this, and gets into a
fighting stance. Robin does the same behind her. Jordan
walks away to grab something.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Sorry guys, but you can't stay.
The cast need some bonding time
after tonight's show.

TEAGAN

Bonding time?! But they get to
stay?!

Teagan points towards the camera again, unimpressed.

BEN

They do.

Ben turns to the camera and gives a thumbs up in a
'You'll be okay' way.

BAILEE

If you want us to leave, you'll
have to make us.

Jordan walks back calmly, smiling. She points the shotgun
at Bailee.

JORDAN

Time to leave.

Jordan, followed by the rest of the theatre folk, begin
to walk towards the survivors.

They start to back up, towards the door. They go outside,
all begging and pleading to be let back in.

Rhi locks the door, and backs away. The survivors begin
banging at the doors, their yelling and begging getting
louder and louder.

Suddenly, there is a loud BANG, quickly followed by two
others. Bailee is still right at the front of the doors,
hitting them.

The other survivors have slowly begun to back away,
looking up at the sky. Quickly, they all bolt down the
street, screaming and running for their lives. Bailee
turns around, and looks up. She looks back at the doors
and gasps.

BLACKOUT

**Text: The theatre group continued to strive during this
dark time.**

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

10

Text: We never saw the other group again.

END

APPENDIX 2

Community Theatre TV Release Form

Actor Release Form

I _____ hereby grant to **Toni Garson** (“the Filmmaker”) the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, poses, actions, plays and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the student motion picture tentatively entitled **Community Theatre TV** (the “Picture”).

I hereby grant to the Filmmaker and his or her successors, assigns and licensees the perpetual right to use, as the Filmmaker may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records which the Filmmaker may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting and/or publicizing of the picture.

I further grant the right to reproduce in any manner whatsoever any recordings including all instrumental, musical, or other sound effects produced by me, in connection with the production and/or postproduction of the Picture. I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Filmmaker or his or her successors, assigns and licensees, any claim, action, suit or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, or for any reason in connection with the Filmmaker’s authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability, to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voice-overs and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand that the Filmmaker may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voice-overs and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify and represent that I am over 18 years of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Character Name: _____

Producer Signature: _____

APPENDIX 3

Community Theatre TV Call Sheets: Days 1 - 4

Director: Toni Garson – 027 870 5990	Community Theatre TV	DATE: Saturday, 16 July, 2016
WEATHER: DON'T MATTER WE INSIDE FOOL First Aid kit in the office. Fire Extinguisher near the doors.	CALL TIME 09:00am Check grid for individual call times	LUNCH 1:00pm- 2:00pm

Production Office	Nearest Hospital to Set
CTTV Productions, 10 Piso Lane, Dinsdale, Hamilton	Waikato Hospital – Selwyn Street & Pembroke Street, Hamilton

LOCATIONS				
#	Location	Address	Parking	Contact
1	Future Te Aroha	13 Boundary Street, Te Aroha	Car park Back of building	Toni C: 027 870 5990
Scene and Description		Cast	Pgs	Loc
10:00am – EPISODE ONE - Scene 1 – All Core Cast – Various Drama Warm ups		5	1	Future Te Aroha
10:45am - Scene 3 – All Core Cast – In the theatre, meeting everyone		5	1-5	Future Te Aroha
12:00pm - Scene 4 – All Core Cast - Waiting for people to turn up for auditions		5	5-7	Future Te Aroha
1:00pm - LUNCH				Future Te Aroha
2:15pm – Carry on Scene 4 – All Core Cast		5	5-7	Future Te Aroha
3:00pm – EPISODE TWO – Scene Two – Biking, Name Game, Costumes, Script		5	1-8	Future Te Aroha
6:00pm – DINNER BREAK				Future Te Aroha
7:00pm – EPISODE FOUR – Scene 2 – Everyone gets stoned		5	2-6	Future Te Aroha
END OF DAY 9:30PM				

#	Cast	Role	Call Time		Set Call
1.	Ben Moore	Ben	09:00am		09:45am
2.	Jordan-Leigh Foulds	Jordan	09:00am		09:45am
3.	Laura Berry	Laura	09:00am		09:45am
4.	Tom Carlyle	Tom	09:00am		09:45am
5.	Rhi Munro	Rhi	09:00am		09:45am
#	Crew	Role	Call Time		
1.	Toni Garson	Director	07:30am		

2.	Stephanie Lane	Sound	08:00am			
3.	Rory Davis	All Rounder	07:30am			
4.	Sian Belvert	Make-Up	08:30am			
5.	Azeekah Parata	Stills Photography	08.30am			

Catering						
Cast/Crew Lunch x 10 to be Hot & Ready @ 1:00pm						

SET REQUIREMENTS						
Props: Refer to Props List						
Wardrobe: Refer to Costume List						

Director: Toni Garson – 027 870 5990	Community Theatre TV	DATE: Sunday, 17 July, 2016
WEATHER: Damn, if it rains that one scene we outside, that gonna be shit as, yo. First Aid kit in the office. Fire Extinguisher near the doors.	CALL TIME 09:00am Check grid for individual call times	LUNCH 1:00pm- 2:00pm

Production Office		Nearest Hospital to Set	
CTTV Productions, 10 Piso Lane, Dinsdale, Hamilton		Waikato Hospital – Selwyn Street & Pembroke Street, Hamilton	
LOCATIONS			
#	Location	Address	Contact
1	Future Te Aroha	13 Boundary Street, Te Aroha	Toni C: 027 870 5990
Scene and Description			Cast
10:00am – Episode Four – Rest of ep			5
11:30am – EPISODE THREE – Scene 2 – Making Posters			4
12:15pm – Scene 4 – Laura talks to Rhi			6
1:00pm - LUNCH			
2:15pm – Scene 6 – Glitter Fight			7
3:15pm – Scene 8 – Picking Posters			8-9
3:50pm – Scene 10 - POW			10
BREAK – 4:30PM-5:15PM			
5:20pm – Scene 11 – Putting out posters			10-11
6:30pm – Scene 12 – Running back to the Centre			11-12
			Future Te Aroha

#	Cast	Role	Call Time			Set Call
1.	Ben Moore	Ben	09:00am			09:45am
2.	Jordan-Leigh Foulds	Jordan	09:00am			09:45am
3.	Laura Berry	Laura	09:00am			09:45am
4.	Tom Carlyle	Tom	09:00am			09:45am
5.	Rhi Munro	Rhi	09:00am			09:45am
#	Crew	Role	Call Time			
1.	Toni Garson	Director	07:30am			
2.	Stephanie Lane	Sound	08:00am			
3.	Rory Davis	All Rounder	07:30am			
4.	Sian Belvert	Make-Up	08:30am			
5.	Azekah Parata	Stills Photography	08.30am			
Catering						
Cast/Crew Lunch x 10 to be Hot & Ready @ 1:00pm						
SET REQUIREMENTS						
Props: Refer to Props List						
Wardrobe: Refer to Costume List						
Makeup:						

Director: Toni Garson – 027 870 5990	Community Theatre TV	DATE: Saturday, 23 July, 2016
WEATHER: Oh hell it better not rain today! First Aid kit in the office. Fire Extinguisher near the doors.	CALL TIME 09:00am Check grid for individual call times	LUNCH 1:00pm- 2:00pm

Production Office	Nearest Hospital to Set
CTTV Productions, 10 Piso Lane, Dinsdale, Hamilton	Waikato Hospital – Selwyn Street & Pembroke Street, Hamilton

LOCATIONS					
#	Location	Address	Parking	Contact	
1	Future Te Aroha	13 Boundary Street, Te Aroha	Car park Back of building	Toni C: 027 870 5990	
2	Old Power Station Building	Opposite NuLook	Meet at Future Te Aroha		
Scene and Description			Cast	Pgs	Loc
10:00am – EPISODE ONE – Scene 2 – Bailee, Robin, Brooklyn – Running away			3	1	Streets
10:45am – EPISODE TWO – Scene 1 – Chris, Jonathan – Army Crawl			2	1	Streets
11:20am – EPISODE THREE – Scene 1 – Meeting the Survivors Group			7	1-4	Power station
1:00pm - LUNCH					Future Te Aroha
2:15pm – Scene 1 – Anything we didn't get before lunch/ Scene 11 - Robin			7	1-4	Power station/Streets
3:15pm – Scene 3 – Water bottle argument – Pagna, Jonathan, Bailee, Robin			4	5	Power station
4:00pm – Scene 5 – Walking down the street			7	7	Streets
4:30pm – Scene 7 – Girls talking – Bailee, Teagan, Shauna, guys walking behind			7	7	Streets
5:00pm – Scene 9 – Guys argue – Jonathan, Pagna, Chris, Robin			4	9	Streets
6:45pm – EPISODE FOUR – Scene 3 – Robin showing the survivors where he saw the Theatre Folk			7	4	Streets
END OF DAY – 7:30PM					

#	Cast	Role	Call Time			Set Call
1.	Bailee Founds	Bailee	09:00am			09:45am
2.	Chris Parminter	Chris	09:30am			10:00am
3.	Shauna Budden	Shauna	09:30am			10:00am
4.	Manonpagna Chin	Pagna	09:30am			10:00am
5.	Teagan Gorman	Teagan	09:30am			10:00am
6.	Jonathan Lane	Jonathan	09:30am			10:00am
7.	Robin Buser	Robin	09:00am			09:45am
8.	Brooklyn Carr	Boy	09:00am			09:45am
#	Crew	Role	Call Time			
1.	Toni Garson	Director	07:30am			
2.	Stephanie Lane	Sound	08:00am			
3.	Rory Davis	All Rounder	07:30am			
4.	Sian Balvert	Make Up	08:30am			
5.	Azeekah Parata	Stills Photography	08:30am			

SET REQUIREMENTS

Props: Refer to Props List

Wardrobe: Refer to Costume List

Makeup:

Catering

Cast/Crew Lunch x 13 to be Hot & Ready @ 1:00pm

Director: Toni Garson – 027 870 5990	Community Theatre TV	DATE: Sunday, 24 July, 2016
WEATHER: Bet it rains from 10:00am to 11:00am. I bet it does. First Aid kit in the office. Fire Extinguisher near the doors.	CALL TIME 09:00am Check grid for individual call times	LUNCH 1:00pm- 2:00pm

Production Office		Nearest Hospital to Set		
CTTV Productions, 10 Piso Lane, Dinsdale, Hamilton		Waikato Hospital – Selwyn Street & Pembroke Street, Hamilton		
LOCATIONS				
#	Location	Address	Contact	
1	Future Te Aroha	13 Boundary Street, Te Aroha	Toni C: 027 870 5990	
Scene and Description		Cast	Pgs	Loc
10:00am – EPISODE FIVE– Scene 1 – Survivors finding the poster		7	1	Streets
11:20am – Scene 2 – Survivors meet theatre group for the first time		12	2-4	Future Te Aroha
12:40pm – Scene 3 – Survivors entering the building + watching performance		12	5-9	Future Te Aroha
1:00pm - LUNCH				Future Te Aroha
2:15pm – Scene 2 – All of scene 2 we didn't get		7	1-4	Future Te Aroha
END OF DAY – 7:30PM				

#	Cast	Role	Call Time			Set Call
1.	Bailee Founds	Bailee	09:00am			09:45am
2.	Chris Parminter	Chris	09:00am			09:45am
3.	Shauna Budden	Shauna	09:00am			09:45am
4.	Manonpagna Chin	Pagna	09:00am			09:45am
5.	Teagan Gorman	Teagan	09:00am			09:45am
6.	Jonathan Lane	Jonathan	09:00am			09:45am
7.	Robin Buser	Robin	9:00am			9:45am
8.	Jordan Leigh Foulds	Jordan	10:00am			11:00am
9.	Ben Moore	Ben	10:00am			11:00am
10.	Laura Berry	Laura	10:00am			11:00am
11.	Rhi Munro	Rhi	10:00am			11:00am
12.	Tom Carlyle	Tom	10:00am			11:00am
#	Crew	Role	Call Time			
1.	Toni Garson	Director	07:30am			
2.	Stephanie Lane	Sound	08:30am			
3.	Rory Davis	All Rounder	07:30am			
4.	Sian Balvert	Make Up	08:30am			
5.	Azeekah Parata	Stills Photography	08:30am			

Catering

Cast/Crew Lunch x 17 to be Hot & Ready @ 1:00pm

SET REQUIREMENTS

Props: Refer to Props List

Wardrobe: Refer to Costume List

Makeup:

CAST AND CREW

CAST NAME

Ben Moore
Jordan Leigh Foulds
Tom Carlyle
Laura Berry
Rhi Munro
Bailee Foulds
Chris Parminter
Manonpagna Chin
Shauna Budden
Jonathan Lane
Robin Büser
Brooklyn Carr

CHARACTER

Ben
Jordan
Tom
Laura
Rhi
Bailee
Chris
Pagna
Shauna
Jonathan
Robin
Kid

CREW

Toni Garson
Stephanie Lane
Rory Davis
Sian Balvert
Kayla Belfield
Fiona Jackson
Brad Verberne
Azeekah Parata

ROLE

Director/Camera/Writer/Producer
Sound/Locations
Sound/Locations/Art Department
Make-Up/Locations/ Art Department
Art Department
Art Department
Music & Sound FX
Still Photography

Community Theatre TV

"Ben is a visionary director who really GETS IT!"

Sam F Jackson



COST: 1 X CANNED FRUIT

HAMLET

TRAGEDY AT PRIDE ROCK

EXCITING!

HAWLET

SO



FLOWER CROWN



WTF? HAMLET!

Tom Carlyle

Rhi Munro



Laura Berry

Ben Moore

Jordan-Leigh Foulds