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At the Crossing

Changing Perceptions, Technologies and Screenplay Functions in Contemporary Cinema

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At the Crossing: Changing Perceptions, Technologies and Screenplay Functions in Contemporary Cinema

John Finnegan

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **DOCTOR OF
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Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore the unseen contributions of screenwriters in a film's production cycle and to understand how perceptions of the implied reader in screenwriting culture can affect the act of writing for the screen. In the mainstream culture of screenwriting, the practitioner is often depicted as a typist relegated to the earliest stages of a production, and expected to satisfy the "capitalistic models of screen production" (Batty 2016, 60). These views often disregard the multitude of other production models in cinema, and the result of this tendency is that emerging screenwriters are sometimes misinformed about the greater complexities of the craft.

This inquiry is achieved using a reciprocal model of practice-led and conventional critical research methodologies, which will illuminate the craft of screenwriting by charting the making of a feature-length academic screenplay, *At the Crossing*. Supporting development documentation accompanies the screenplay, including a production schedule and budget, which attempts to contextualise the screenplay in an industrial setting. The act of writing a screenplay in an academic environment enables me to establish the ways that the screenwriter is influenced by the production process, as well as by practitioners in the field of film production.

As part of my research, four award-winning screenwriters, ranging from different areas of the filmmaking spectrum, were interviewed to learn about their role in the creation and production of four films. These case studies highlight the extent of the screenwriter's reach across different production models and show that the screenwriter plays a significant role in all aspects of film production, not just its early conception. Furthermore, a historical analysis of the craft of screenwriting reveals how the earliest scenarios link with the different production models of cinema at the time and shows that Kickstarter, as well as other digital crowdfunding platforms, might have a major role on contemporary 'digital' modes of screenwriting. The conclusions of my research show that, in an independent and contemporary production, the role of the writer, as well as the function of the screenplay text, is fluid and not tied to traditional definitions. It determines that a greater understanding of the implied reader of screenplays can benefit the writer in their attempts to craft a compelling and production friendly screen idea and that the advent of digital technologies provides the screenwriter with innovative and efficient strategies to communicate that idea. An edited section of chapter three, has been published in the *Journal of Screenwriting*, 7:3 in 2016 and an edited version of chapter one has been published in *New Cinemas*, 15:2 in 2018.

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Introduction: A Review of Screenwriting Studies and Practices

The young couple is making ham, and the wife is cutting the edges off the sides, and the husband asks before she bakes it, “why do you cut off the sides of the ham before you bake it? That seems so wasteful.” She says, “I don’t know, that’s what my mum always did.” He says, “Well let’s ask your mother.” They ask the mother, “Mum, how come you cut all the ends off of the ham before you bake it?” She responds, “Well I don’t know, that’s what my grandmother did, let’s go ask her.” And then they ask the grandmother, “Why do you cut off all the ends of the ham off before you baked it?” The grandmother says, “Well that’s the only way I could get it to fit in the pan I had back then.

Rodriguez, *Film is Dead: An Evening with Robert Rodriguez* (2003)

Many of the techniques employed by screenwriters today stem from the traditions of the Hollywood production model. Indeed, the culture of screenwriting, as defined by Kevin Boone in *Script Culture and the American Screenplay* (2008), is built on a foundation of received wisdom. Boone explains how the sale of Shane Black’s original speculative screenplay for \$1.7m inspired a generation of student and non-professional writers to adopt the traditions of this Hollywood model, to meet the strict requirements of the commercial film industry (2008, 26-27).¹ The popularity of a conventional approach to the craft in screenwriting and filmmaking communities around the world has also affected contemporary screenwriting pedagogical approaches. Screenwriters are trained to believe that scripts are read for a particular set of reasons, and read in particular ways. For example, if a script is too long, or too short, it might be considered unproducible. If the formatting of the script is not precise, it is dismissed as amateurish or unprofessional. Story analyst Marc Weinberg suggests that if the script does not impress the reader in the first ten pages, it will be passed over (cited in Taylor and Batty 2016, 213). While this may be true in parts of the commercial sector, it does not represent the habits of all script readers. Much of this misunderstanding stems from a vast canon of screenwriting manuals and how-to guides that preach a one size fits all model that dates back to the earliest days of the craft.² It would seem that the deep-rooted history of screenwriting in cinema hinders its progression as a practice in the 21st century.

It is not my intention to question the validity of these works of literature from which writers, including I, have benefitted from in learning their craft. However, away from the

¹ Shane Black’s sale of *The Last Boy Scout* (Scott 1991) broke the record for the most paid to a screenwriter for a speculative screenplay.

² Gordon (1914), Thomas (1914) and Emerson and Loos (1920) have published some of the original craft manuals to educate writers on the narrative expectations and conventions in the Hollywood system.

commercial avenues of film production, screenwriting practice is far more diverse, and this diversity is not always reflected in the texts. In the low-to-no budget sector of filmmaking, as one example, the screenplay is free to be constructed in some different ways and serves as more than just a blueprint for a story; it can act as a blueprint for the production itself. Screenwriting craft manuals in the commercial sector tend to place emphasis on the writer's relationship to the implied reader, such as the script agent or studio executive, though they rarely make reference to the readers in indie and underground sectors of film.³ These readers include the practitioners involved in the production and the funding gatekeepers in the form of arts councils and crowdfunding backers. However, whether the screenwriter seeks to practice in a mainstream avenue of production or an independent one, they will always have to consider the implied or 'ideal' reader. Given the practical nature of this research, the implied reader of screenplays heavily informs this thesis. Therefore, a discussion on the issues of implied readership and the notion of the 'ideal' reader in literary studies is needed in order to understand better how this concept lends itself to the field of screenwriting studies.

The term 'implied reader' was coined by Wayne Booth in his seminal text *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) as a counter-argument to the implied author, and it is the projected or 'ideal' reader that the author had in mind when writing the work (Schmid 2013). The ideal reader belongs "exclusively to the sphere of the real author, in whose imagination he or she exists" (Schmid 2013). In short, the ideal recipient of the message "is a mirror image, who is the equivalent of the author, which duplicates him or her" (Baxtin, cited in Schmid 2013). The ideal reader is something that sits in the front of the mind of the practicing screenwriter at all times. The acknowledgement of such a concept raises questions as to how we write and the extent to which this ultimately arbitrary concept influences the work. As Staiger argues:

The ideal reader is really the reader that the critic, as a representative of a class, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual preference, has reason to favour for some cause. The motives may be social or political; most likely they are not conscious, but they are not innocent since they may have effects such as promoting certain types of reading as appropriate or correct (1992, 26).

The screenplay as a medium is unique in that it is written for different readers, not just movie going audiences. These implied readers exist as agents, producers, directors, actors, and the many other roles that constitute a film production. Therefore, the implied reader which exists in the mind of the writer, also exists across the entirety of the production pipeline as screenplays

³ One such text is Grove's *Write and Sell the Hot Screenplay* (2014).

are read by various professionals from the earliest pitch meetings to the post-production and marketing stages. How these readers engage with a screenplay can have a significant influence on how the writer approaches the development of their text. Perhaps an agent reads the script looking for sales potential, or a producer might read with an eye for budgetary concerns. A director and an actor may seek out similar aspects relating to character and story, while a cinematographer might read it for its visual cues. Or perhaps the reading is purely for entertainment, which is not unlikely in a medium built on the premise of “distraction for profit” (Harvey 1991, 46). The reading of screenplays has become a popular past time among film fans who see the literary artefact as a window into the production of their favourite film.⁴ The screenplay is a ‘writerly’ text (Barthes 1967), each line open to interpretation by a volume of different practitioners who are eager to make their contribution to the production. The reader, whether they are an agent, a producer, director or actor, to name a few, wields influence over the writing process as well as the writer who seeks their participation.

Throughout this thesis, I will continually refer to the implied or ‘idea’ reader and spectator in screenwriting. I use this term as a generalisation for all the consumers of a screenplay, be they members of a film production or spectators of a film, whose expectations inform our approach to the craft of writing for the screen.

A model of research which can explicate the implied reader of screenplays across all stages of a film’s development could provide the researcher with an insight into the influences that affect the writer’s process. However, existing research into reader-response criticisms, in particular Wolfgang Iser (1981), argues that one can never truly understand their implied or ideal reader.⁵ This is an argument that is supported here, and yet in the wider ‘screenwriting culture’, an entire sub-industry of so called gurus who claim to defy this inability to understand the reader has emerged.

The State of Screenwriting Culture

When discussing the craft of screenwriting, and the field of screenwriting research, it is impossible to avoid addressing aspects of the growing ‘screenwriting culture’. In this thesis, I privilege Boone’s description of the culture of screenwriting, which describes the attempts of writers to learn from industry veterans to better conform to the expectations of the Hollywood

⁴ The publication of screenplays, such as the Newmarket brand, can be seen as an attempt to capitalise on the success of many popular and successful films. These published scripts feature imagery from the completed film, production notes, and in some instances, conceptual artwork and other insights into the making of the film.

⁵ Wolfgang Iser has written about the implied reader and the ideal reader in his reader-response criticism of literary study.

production model (2008, 26-27). This culture, according to Boone, comprises of literary works that exist to teach the craft of screenwriting to non-professional writers, but it also encompasses screenwriting competitions, blogs and websites, YouTube channels and podcasts dedicated to the craft, as well as an online community of screenwriting enthusiasts devoted to sharing industry screenplays.

Jill Nelmes, in her appraisal of the state of screenwriting scholarship, claims that “there has been an increasing acceptance of the study of the screenplay as a form, which is separate from and yet part of the film production process” (2014, 301). Certainly, the screenplay and the screenwriter have received greater recognition both in scholarship and in the wider cinema culture in recent years. While the screenplay was once disregarded in favour of the completed film by both scholars and enthusiasts alike, it is now considered to be a valuable artefact which can provide insight into the development of the film. In the academy, organisations such as the Screenwriting Research Network, have played an important role in this wider recognition. The work of theoreticians attempting to isolate the screenplay as an autonomous text, and no longer bound to the film counterpart, has given new agency to the screenplay and fostered debate as to its place in literary culture. In cinema studies, David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson and Janet Staiger, in their seminal text *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1985), provide a rich historical foundation from which scholars can better understand the different modes of film production from the late 1800s until the 1960s. However, as Batty states, in his text *Writing for the Screen: Creative and Critical Approaches* (Batty and Waldeback 2008), “film and television theory is not screenwriting theory” (2008, 4), and reminds us that the craft of screenwriting presents its own opportunities to create specific knowledge about the field (2008, 4).

Claudia Sternberg explored the screenplay with such a purpose in her PhD thesis, at a time when, as she puts it, “screenwriting research was neither wanted nor well accommodated” (2014). The thesis was then published as the monograph, *Written for the Screen* (Sternberg 1997). This research has been built upon by theorists like Steven Price, who explored the historical origins of the screenplay in *A History of the Screenplay* (2013), and his earlier text *The Screenplay: Authorship, Theory and Criticism* (2010). Steven Maras similarly writes about the craft in his key text, *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* (2009). That foundation has since been strengthened in recent years and built upon by theorists such as Ian W. MacDonald, Kathryn Millard, Bridget Conor and Craig Batty, resulting in a widely recognised field of research in the academy. According to Eva Novrup Redvall, author of *Writing and Producing Television Drama in Denmark: From The Kingdom to The Killing* (2013), “research in the past few years has shown the value of a variety of approaches ranging from theoretical

analysis of the ontology of the screenplay to practice-based analyses of screenplay development and dealing with many different kinds of film and media cultures” (2013, 5-6).

Practitioners working in the mainstream sectors have gained a significant following on social media and other online channels, where they enlighten and educate the screenwriting community. The circulation of industry screenplays online has also increased the exposure of the craft to the masses. It means that students of the craft are no longer reliant on the manuals, how-to guides or the published screenplays found in stores, to learn from experts. Screenwriting competitions and film festivals with a strong emphasis on the screenplay (such as the Austin Film Festival) have offered the amateur writer an alternative avenue of career progression, avoiding the screenplay agent and our conventional understanding of the implied script reader which typically tends to ignore the many practitioners in a production who engage with a screenplay. The result is that now, more than ever, the craft of screenwriting has become more accessible to the film fan and the screenwriting enthusiast.

And yet, the screenwriting culture which Boone describes is still heavily informed by the industrialisation of cinema and the harmful notion of the screenplay as a pre-text document. Filmmaker and scholar, Pier Paolo Pasolini wrote about the screenplay’s dependency on the film in his essay, *The Screenplay as a “Structure that wants to be Another Structure”* (1965).

If, therefore, an author decides to adopt the “technique” of the screenplay as autonomous work, he must accept at the same time the allusion to a “potential” cinematographic work, without which the technique he had adopted is fictitious – and thus falls directly into the traditional forms of literary writings (1986, 187).

As Pasolini explains, the screenplay is linked to the cinema. Without this connection, there can be no screenplay in the strict sense. The screenwriters operating on social media, blogs and websites bring a similar logic to their work.⁶ These new ‘gurus’, such as John August or *The Bitter Script Reader*, exhibit a preference towards traditional film production and neglect the other avenues of screen work, such as video games and the web series. They press a need for agency representation, industrial networking and a need for writers to conform to codes of practice to have their work adapted to the screen.

Screenwriting software continues to enforce a conventional approach to industry regulation, serving more as a tool for helping writers to follow the ‘rules’ rather than to facilitate a creative workflow. Eric Heisserer, the screenwriter of the critically acclaimed

⁶ In researching these blogs, I used Stephanie Palmer’s screenwriting website *Good in a Room* for reference (Palmer n.d.).

Arrival (Villeneuve 2016), found that these unspoken rules hindered his writing process. To communicate the complex linguistic-related concepts of the story to his implied reader, Heisserer employed simple diagrams in his writings. However, as Heisserer notes, this was problematic because no screenwriting programme on the market allowed for the inclusion of other media in the text. Instead, Heisserer resorted to using other programmes in conjunction with his screenwriting software as a means to include the required graphics (Heisserer 2016). This is one contemporary example of how writers are finding ways to work around these inflexible aspects of screenwriting practice.

Screenplay competitions are also guilty of a bias towards the mainstream industry. Competitions such as the *Nichols Fellowship Award* (Oscars.org) and *Big Break* (finaldraft.com) both have ties to high profile and influential industry organisations, the Academy of Motion Pictures and Arts and Final Draft. In *Screenwriting in a Digital Age*, Kathryn Millard, a theoretician and practitioner, highlights the absurdity of some of the accepted standards that these competitions enforce:

Even now, the Nicholl Fellowship Guidelines, sponsored by the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, warn that you can create a negative impression of your script through the following list of foibles and indiscretions: ‘Art on the script cover...Hard, slick, Acco covers (i.e. plastic spine binding)... Commercial, “college paper” covers... Wimpy brads... Long “dangerous” brads ... Cut “dangerous” brads’. Reading this list, a trip to the local stationary shop begins to sound surprisingly complex (2014, 32).

Screenplay culture seems tied to the commercial film industry, just as the script is considered linked to the film. The shadow that the Hollywood production model has cast on the culture of writing for the screen has meant that innovation and creative experimentation in screenwriting has ceased, and the techniques of the craft now depend heavily on the trends of the mainstream model.

Therefore, I suggest that a model of screenwriting practice, that places emphasis on the writer and their relationship to the film’s production, rather than trying to satisfy the ‘gatekeepers’ of the commercial industry, can provide a more rigorous avenue of screenwriting research, which aids in the understanding of alternative screenwriting practices.⁷

⁷ A term used by Blackaby to describe agents and other executives which writers must first convince of their worthiness as professionals before their work can be seen by others (Blackaby 1986, 25).

Differing Views of the Screenplay's Function

There is much dispute in screenwriting discourse as to what a screenplay is, as well as its function in film production.⁸ Syd Field, arguably the most influential screenwriting 'guru,' is very precise in his description of the screenplay, arguing that it is distinct from other texts such as the novel and the stage play (2007, 19). Field employs the three-act structure paradigm as the cornerstone for how a screen story should be presented (2007, 21). In scholarship, there is a greater acceptance of the diversity that the screenplay form can take, and such definite approaches to the craft are being revised. Philip Dunne (cited in Banks 2015, 4), argues that "the true analogy of script to picture is that of architect's blueprint to a finished house. Without the first, the second could not exist." On the other hand, Maras states that the screenplay's comparison to a blueprint is now in question (Maras 2009, 22). A common response to this theory is the common acceptance that an architectural blueprint is prescriptive and the script, due to the collaborative nature of the film, is suggestive and in flux (Millard 2014, 31). In the craft of filmmaking, screenplays are typically rewritten in the form of a shooting script by the director, and then again, in a sense, at the editing stage. Still, the blueprint analogy is one favoured by many practitioners, such as Frances Ford Coppola (Coppola, cited in Maras 2009, 120).⁹

Steven Maras challenges the blueprint metaphor, arguing that it "undersells" the work (Maras 2009, 73), explaining that "the blueprint idea can lead to misconceptions about the nature of control over the material" (Maras 2009, 123). Maras suggests there is a risk with what he calls "overidentification" between the writer and the script, "aligning the work of the writer too closely with the creation of the blueprint" thus trivialising the contributions of the wider cast and crew in the overall production process (Maras 2009, 124). Maras also acknowledges that the blueprint metaphor can relegate some non-conformist types of screenwriting, which seek to break away from typical Hollywood conventions.

Referring to the functional qualities of a screenplay, Sergei Eisenstein suggests that the screenplay "expresses the purpose of the experience that the audience must undergo" (cited in Geerts 2014, 133). Eisenstein's philosophy can also extend to the screenplay's performative qualities, which can be performed and adapted by the reader. The performative aspect of the text is a unique attribute of the screenplay, shared only with the stage-play. While novels can certainly be performed, their format does not demand such a reading, whereas the script (being

⁸ Steven Maras explores these debates in his seminal text *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* (2009).

⁹ Coppola has been cited as using the blueprint analogy to describe his own experiences writing for the screen.

economical in its language) maintains a level of simplicity in both action and dialogue to support its performative function. Steven Price reminds us that the present tense language on the page is designed to keep the reader in a performative mind-set, present in the moment of the performance as it is happening in our minds (2010, 114). The performative qualities of the screenplay challenge how we read, but also how we write. In an ‘industry-facing’ mode of writing, the author is discouraged from specifying how to execute a line of dialogue or an action, so as to allow actors and performers to make their contributions. Screenwriters are also discouraged from offering specific directions in the screenplay and depriving the director of their contributions to the adaptation. However, as Price explains, writers have found ways of working around this issue by employing terms such as “we see” (2010, 116). Writers can suggest a specific reading of the text while refraining from specifying how to execute the adaptation.

Rikka Pelo provides further insight into the complexity of the craft, and the role of the writer when she discusses the ‘invisible role’ Tonino Guerra played in collaborating with auteur directors Michelangelo Antonioni and Andrei Tarkovsky (2010). Pelo deciphers the contributions made by the screenwriter during the different phases of the screenwriting process. Her investigation into this accomplished screenwriter’s collaborative experiences leaves little hope for the notion of the screenwriter as an engineer, or an architect, as other theoreticians might hope. Pelo’s case study instead explain the screenwriter’s contribution using a metaphor, specifically a comparison that Guerro makes between film structure and “something musical” (Pelo 2010, 121).

The sensitive metaphor with which he speaks of the structure as the heart of the story itself suggests a concept of screenwriting similar to a composer working with his vocal or instrumental material, or to that of a poet absorbed in the materiality of his medium, and not as a technician only working out a vision of the great artist (Pelo 2010, 121).

Pelo is a defender of the poetic nature of screenwriting, and the role of the writer; a master of “visual vocabulary” (2010, 127) whose skills are unique to cinema and other related visual media, such as the video game. Such imaginative and diverse comparisons can leave the screenwriter feeling empowered with a skill set beyond that of any of the usual mundane metaphors used by theorists.

The identity of the screenwriter is always in question. Academics debate what the screenwriter does and the boundaries of their role and each director has their own preferred way of working with a writer, as will be revealed in the various case studies explored in this

thesis. Practitioners and theorists alike contest the creative contribution of the screenwriter in the filmmaking process, due in part to the fact that no clear definition exists as to the exact job of the writer, specifically when it comes to the collaborative nature of the craft. In films such as *Adaptation* (Jonze 2002), the screenwriter is portrayed as an individual artist, far removed from the rest of the production crew. The struggling writer battling for creative control of a story, such as Griffin Mill in *The Player* (Altman 1992), is one recurring theme in these depictions. However, in the cases where the writer and director exhibit a healthy creative relationship, the enhanced role of the writer, as well as a clearer definition of their role in the production, becomes apparent. Hitchcock's relationship with screenwriter Joseph Stefano on *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960) represents one such example of a strong collaboration between director and writer, where the writer is not merely hired as a typist for the all-knowing director. In this instance, it was Stefano's job not to create the best possible story, as this was already predetermined by Hitchcock through collaborations beforehand. Stefano's job was to *tell* the best possible story. In this regard, Hitchcock needed a writer that would "facilitate the process of audience identification and engagement" (Raubichek 2011, 9). Hitchcock's collaboration with Stefano provides an interesting take on the typical responsibility afforded a screenwriter. In this case, Stefano is writing with audience engagement in mind. What should be derived from this relationship (which resulted in one of the most acclaimed films in history) is that the screenwriter can act as a story-teller rather than a story creator.

The writer is expected to consider not just a reader, but a viewer as well. This additional consumer of the screen idea affects the way the script is written. Price reminds us that the present tense language on the page is designed to keep the reader in a performative mind-set (2010, 114) and so as writers, we imagine the script as a film, and when we read it, we project the film to be in front of us.

We position ourselves as filmmakers in order to craft the best possible screen idea at a screenplay stage. Our acknowledgement of the cinematic apparatus means that the craft of writing for the screen draws parallels to the craft of filmmaking. Yet, screenwriters don't often identify themselves as filmmakers, despite the fact that it is common in the film industry for practitioners, other than the director, to identify themselves as such.

In my career, I have always considered myself a filmmaker. I worked as an assistant director, using the screenplay as a production guide on set. Later, as an editor, I found myself using the screenplay again but as a point of reference for structure and pacing. I considered myself a filmmaker in each of these situations, not the author of the project, but as a valuable member of the production team. As a screenwriter, I still consider myself a filmmaker, not

simply a writer, and as such, I am interested in how the screenwriting process changes throughout the long and complicated film production cycle. Therefore, this research has attempted to answer the research question; what are the unseen contributions of screenwriters in a production setting? In seeking the answer to this question, it is also useful to investigate who the implied reader is in this setting, and how they affect the writing of a screen concept. The hypothesis of this research states that screenwriting practice is far more diverse than what mainstream screenwriting literature, such as screenwriting manuals, and academic literature recognises. It argues instead that the craft of screenwriting encompass an array of techniques and methods not commonly addressed in classrooms or guides. These can include the development of conceptual artwork, a scene animatic, pitch trailers or social media strategies to test marketplace potential. Many of these techniques are already used by directors, producers and other filmmakers.

An exploration of such can reveal aspects of the craft of screenwriting which go unrecognised in screenwriting culture. The identity of the screenwriter is linked to the role of the screenplay document in the wider industry. By unpacking the role of the writer and illuminating the unspoken contributions of the screenwriter to a production, we can enhance the role of the writer and position them as a filmmaker in similar standing to a director or producer.

For clarity, I will propose a distinction between the unproduced ‘academic’ screenplay, written as a research artefact and free from the pressures of the film industry, and an ‘industry facing screenplay’, written with the expressed intention of being adapted for the screen. Defining these two types of screenplays is necessary, as it can be misleading to assume that all screenplays are written with the expressed intention of being produced. Many amateur writers undertake writing projects strictly for the enjoyment of writing, with no connection to film communities. The methods they employ, as well as the influences that shape their texts, can differ to those writers aspiring to work in the film industry. Throughout this thesis, I will refer to this third type of screenwriting as ‘autonomous screenwriting’. The distinction I propose, though a simplification of the screenwriting craft, can provide a clearer means of discussing the function of the script, and the role of the writer, by helping to understand better the environments in which the screen work was created.

The Multiple Definitions of Independent Cinema

As explained earlier in this introduction, I will be focusing my research on screenwriting for the independent (indie) sector of cinema due to the variety of experimental, unconventional and innovative approaches to screenwriting and filmmaking in this area. A discussion of screenwriting in indie cinema also offers the scholar a more representative view of screenwriting culture, which can differ from the industrialised methods of the mainstream. However, in scholarship, there is a variety of definitions put forth by scholars as to what constitutes ‘independent’ cinema, with many contributing their varied meanings to the term ‘independent’ (King 2013, 260). Geoff King, who researches on the subject of independent cinema, opens his introductory chapter of *Indie 2.0* (2013) with a quote by Ted Hope. In the piece, Hope states that “the proclamations of Indie Film’s demise are grossly exaggerated. How can there be a ‘Death of Indie’ when Indie – real Indie, True Indie – has yet to even live?” (2013, 1). Zimmermann suggests instead that the term ‘independent film’ “requires a serious overhaul and a cogent updating”, and credits digital production technologies and contemporary production models as the need for such a revision (cited in Holmlund and Wyatt 2004, 245). With this in mind, it is important to clearly define what I mean by ‘independent cinema’ so as to avoid confusion.

The term ‘indie’, according to Newman, carries a set of connotations which are far removed from its literal origins. Hillier defines the movement as “work different from the dominant or mainstream, whether this relationship is defined primarily in economic terms (production and distribution) or in aesthetic or stylistic terms” (2001, ix). Chris Holmlund, who writes about American cinema, considers the term to be “ill-defined and hotly debated” (2004, 2), though she proposes possible criteria for such films in her analysis of *Northern Lights*, suggesting that it is a combination of “casting, pace, cinematic style, and social or moral vision” that can come to define an independent film (2004, 29). King produces his definition for the term ‘indie’, as separate from ‘independent’, to denote films which were produced after the first decade of the millennium (2013, 2). He suggests that resistance to marketing models exhibited by Hollywood can also be a sign of independence from the mainstream (2013, 120).

Distribution, as one example, is commonly seen as a defining factor of many indie films, however, as Lewis highlights, many distributors are not independent at all, rather they are subsidiaries of larger Hollywood studios (1998, 325). As Hillier explains, Chaplin’s United Artists, a studio established as an alternative to the other majors, was still dependent on the distribution model put in place by those same institutions he was so eager to break free from (2001, xiv). Disney’s acquisition of Miramax in the early 90s sparked the beginning of an array

of ‘indie’ branches from other studios, such as Fox Searchlight, Sony Picture Classics and Paramount Vantage as a means of capitalising on the successful independent market (Perren, 2001, 30-31). This would give rise to “Indiewood” (King 2009), another division of the independent cinema and its most commercially profitable. Andrew Gay, citing Mark Harris (2014, 260) reminds us of Hollywood’s reluctance to gamble with new ideas. The acquisition of indie companies by major studios or the establishment of indie branches can be interpreted as an attempt by studios to capitalise on the niche market value of this sector. One has only to look at the nominations for the major award shows to see just how infused the independent model has become with the Hollywood institution, and yet, it is these case studies that dominate much of the discourse.

An analysis of many distribution practices in the indie sector brings their independent status into question. Miramax has demonstrated in its production of *Kids* (Clark 1994), that it was bound to its corporate parent, Disney (Newman 2009, 24). As Perren highlights, Miramax also came under scrutiny by the press for their misrepresentation of *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) as an independent film (2001, 37). Miramax appeared at the time to make films that were counter to the Hollywood model, yet their films provided audiences with more of the usual Hollywood recipe (Perren 2001, 37). In 2002, Miramax distributed *Gangs of New York* (Scorsese 2002), the 97 million dollar Martin Scorsese/ Leonardo DiCaprio vehicle, and demonstrated just how far the company had come from the days of *Sex, Lies and Videotape* (Soderbergh 1989).

A dependency on mainstream distribution models is understandable for such case studies. As Holmlund highlights, there has always been a lack of distribution opportunities for filmmakers, even if they are fortunate enough to complete their film (2004, 265). Therefore, it is also logical why much of the literature surrounding so-called ‘independent’ distribution models seem to link the art of cinema to a standard of commercialism and capitalism that is incompatible with the very nature of ‘indie’ cinema.

The independent culture of filmmaking has always existed, dating back to the earliest years of the medium. Lewis reminds us that at one point, even Hollywood was considered a departure from the dominant system (1998, xiv). I would argue that this culture stretches even further to the days before the studio system, when the filmmakers of the so called “cameraman system” of 1896 until 1907 were free to experiment with technology, to tell the stories they wanted to tell and not bow to pressures of commercial concerns.¹⁰ The advent of digital

¹⁰ The term “cameraman system” is used by Staiger (cited in Bordwell, et al. 1985).

technologies has returned this degree of independence to filmmakers now. The affordability of this technology has meant that even the most basic filmmaking equipment today can still be better than a high-end toolkit from a decade earlier (Figgis, cited in King 2013, 78).¹¹ This technology is also matched by equally effective digital distribution and exhibition methods, offering the filmmaker an alternative avenue of development than what was previously available. Today, platforms such as iTunes, YouTube, Vimeo and other such digital streaming services allow filmmakers of any genre, budget or subject to guarantee, even from the outset, a distribution vehicle for their work. For an audience, it also offers a degree of independence in what they can choose to watch.

These advancements in production and consumption methods signify the importance of having a current definition as to what constitutes independent cinema, in order to bring academic discussions of independent cinema production in line with the methods of the filmmaking community as a whole. Scholar and filmmaker Alex Munt suggests that the Hollywood model has “eroded (or is at the least being radically reconfigured) with the expansion of the digital ‘screenscape’” (2014, 325). Almost every stage of the production process has vastly changed with the advent of digital culture. The funding gatekeepers, such as studio executives or government funding agencies are no longer the only means by which filmmakers can finance their work. King argues that the advent of DV (digital video) and other digital technologies have “democratised” film production (2013, 117). I also argue that Kickstarter and other digital crowdfunding platforms have continued to ‘democratise’ the development process of the screenplay as well.

With free and affordable production technologies and open distribution platforms, filmmakers can remain independent across the entirety of the production process. Therefore, a definition that centres on the production model employed in a film’s creation, realisation and distribution can help clear up some of the confusing and troubling aspects of the discourse. The definition that I will privilege for this research is one that accepts the term ‘independent’ as a spectrum rather than a binary definition. I argue that a film can have different ‘independent’ attributes, such as funding or production methods. However, it may also rely on a model of distribution, for example, one that hinges on an industrialised model that is common in the mainstream. Such a redefinition can provide the scholar with a more accurate depiction of film

¹¹ Filmmaker Mike Figgis is known for his ultra-low budget and innovative digital filmmaking practices. His book *Digital Film Making* (2012) discusses these practices.

production models and provide alternative avenues of discourse when considering the screenplay in this process.

Methodological Approach

To answer these research questions, it is vital that a significant portion of this investigation is conducted in a practice-led setting. Such a mode of research can help shed light on the practices of the screenwriter both in and outside of ‘the industry’ while avoiding outdated case studies in literature or misassumptions of the craft. The popularity of practice-led research methods in creative writing scholarship, in particular, the emerging practice of academic screenwriting as a mode of research, also provides an opportunity for these industry focused questions to be explored and answered in an academic setting.

The adoption of practice-led research methodologies has been a contentious avenue of research in scholarship. According to Nelson, “the emphasis on studio practice in art schools or academies has found itself in tension with university protocols in respect of degree-awarding powers and the question of what constitutes knowledge in research” (2013, 3). According to Smith and Dean, one of the fundamental problems of innovative approaches to research is that “knowledge can take many different forms and occur at various levels of precision and stability” (2009, 4). In *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, Barbara Bolt’s notion of “materialising practices” is used to highlight the significance of the adage ‘learn by doing’. In this text Bolt cites Heidegger’s argument that “we come to know the world theoretically only after we have come to understand it through handling” (Bolt, cited in Barret and Bolt 2010, 143). Such an approach to the acquisition of new knowledge is common in vocational institutions where a hands-on method of learning is necessary to train students in various trades, and it is now becoming a more acceptable means of conducting research in academic institutions also.

Despite a growing acceptance for this species of research, it is still difficult to find pockets of the academic community where studio research is held in the same regard as traditional critical research projects. Grant capture, for one, can be particularly challenging for the practice-led researcher (Estelle and Barrett 2010, 2) and this represents just one of the hurdles that researchers of any background face on an annual basis. Another obstacle is that, even in sectors where practice-led research is an important avenue of knowledge generation, the acceptance of this method of research can at times be limited to the fine arts, such as “literature, music and the visual arts” (Nelson 2013, 3). In many instances, new media, including film and television production and the burgeoning educational field of video game

design are all but ignored. This bias towards traditional artistic media can lead scholars to rely on industrial case studies and other conventional methods of research when studying a field such as cinema, and this, in turn, can result in misassumptions about underexplored aspects of the field, such as the areas discussed in this thesis.

Practice-led research is particularly valuable in the study of film production because film production models, as well as the ways in which we consume visual media, have changed so rapidly since the turn of the 21st century. The technologies employed in the creation and consumption of cinema have also advanced at a greater rate. It is arguably no longer enough for researchers to draw on historical case studies when researching or discussing the particulars of the film industry. At one time there were vast parallels between the practical work of filmmakers ranging from the 1930s and 1940s, up until the late 1990s. Today, however, it would be hard to find the same parallels between a film produced in the 21st century with that of a film produced in the 1980s or even the 1990s. Such is the degree with which the medium has changed.

And yet, these technologies that I refer to have become readily accessible to almost any artist and the learning curve for these has rapidly decreased as well. These technologies, including digital photography and editing tools, online distribution and consumption platforms, or even the advent of crowdsourcing methods employed by practitioners now, are in widespread use across all sectors of cinema. Therefore, for scholars to continue to claim expertise in this ever evolving industry without having understood the craft through “handling” (Bolt, cited in Barret and Bolt 2010, 143) can only serve to hinder the progression of research in the field of cinema and creative writing.

With regards to screenwriting research specifically, much can be learned about the craft from the act of writing for the screen. The writing of the script, after all, is not just a literary craft, as it is synergistically linked to visual media, notably cinema and television, but also video games and web media (such as Netflix, Amazon and other streaming services). The screenplay text can serve as a bridge to a variety of other disciplines and provide the researcher with insight into the creation of content in such media. Researchers may be wary about engaging in the film production process, due to the financial commitments, technical learning curves and logistical obstacles that come with the craft. But the creation of a screenplay exhibits none of these barriers and can still provide a window into the various factors that influence the creation of screen media.

Batty and McAulay (2016) argue in favour of this “emerging site of knowledge production” and the “academic screenplay” as a vehicle for creative practice research and state

that “we feel it important to approach screenwriting as a research practice rather than a professional practice in order that the domain of the work is clearly established. In short, though the screenplay work may find a place in “the industry” at some stage, during candidature it should only be understood as existing in the academy” (2016).

The practice undertaken in this research reveals the ways in which the logistics of film production can inform the writing process, but also the many unrecognised roles that the writer plays in the production process. The practice is presented in two sections. To explore the writing process with consideration to the implied reader of screenplays, I wrote a feature length academic screenplay, *At the Crossing*. The screenplay is accompanied by various development documentation, including a synopsis, treatment, and various visual materials such as character sheets, conceptual artwork and posters. The objective of these visual media is to explore how the conception and growth of the screen idea are affected using alternative methods. These documents are also accompanied by a production schedule and budget breakdown, so as to simulate the demands of writing, what I will refer to as, ‘industry facing screenplays’ and to allow the screenplay to be influenced by industrial logistics such as financial and practical limitations.

Such an approach to screenwriting is counter to the traditional work of the writer, where one is typically expected to operate strictly with the written word, and resigned to the pre-production stages. Furthermore, areas such as budgeting and scheduling, as well as some of the more design focused tasks of the production, are considered to be entirely outside of the writer’s remit. Nevertheless, many independent film communities are demonstrating a departure from traditional methods of screenwriting and embracing a wider array of methods in the creation of their concept. In these sectors, it is not uncommon for the writer to also act as a producer on the project (Kerrigan and Batty 2016, 140).

When discussing practice-led methods of screenwriting research, it is important to distinguish the academic screenplay from the ‘autonomous’ and ‘industry facing screenplays’ that I have referenced above. It can be misleading to assume that ‘industry facing screenplays’, written for the industry and developed in an industrial setting can serve as works of practice-led research. Likewise, an ‘autonomous’ speculative screenplay, written free of industry demands must be understood as its own text, and not automatically assumed to be a research artefact waiting to be unpacked by the scholar. Batty and McAulay help us to understand when the academic screenplay becomes a research artefact:

In relation to creative practice research, knowing occurs when the practitioner has experienced something through its production and is then in a position to reflect on that experience, for the benefit of not only the self but also others: “it is the shift in common sense and the fresh ability to account for that shift that ensures the occurrence is research” (Gibson, cited in Batty and McAulay, 2016) (2016).

At the Crossing was written based on my own knowledge of screenwriting form and technique and its value as a research artefact was realised through my own reflection on the experience of that production. In keeping with the definition above, the screenplay would not have produced the same knowledge if it had been written as an application of prior critical research.

The second aspect of the practice-led research comes in the form of a short film, *Still Life* (Mac Coille 2014). Produced during the first year of this research, it is based on a speculative script that I wrote before this research. It was included as part of this thesis due to the valuable role it played in allowing me to investigate the collaborative nature of screenwriting in a production environment. It also afforded me the chance to document the role of the writer and their unseen contributions to the production from the earliest conception of the screen idea until the completion of the final film. The inclusion of *Still Life* as a case study in this thesis further supports my research into the role of the writer in a production setting but also offers a window into the contemporary practices of screenwriters in short film production. Research into short film production, in particular, screenwriting for the short film, is one that is underexplored in screenwriting scholarship and is analysed in detail in Chapter one. The use of practice-led research, specifically the production of these two projects, is critical to this thesis, and the goals of this thesis could not have been achieved with conventional critical research alone.

There is a limit to his research method. The first is that without securing appropriate funding, and the support of a film production company, it is impossible to situate the act of writing this screenplay in a truly industrial setting. Conversely, I argue that such an issue is not solely related to my research, but to any study of industrial screenwriting practice. The act of producing a script for the screen is an expensive and time-consuming one, requiring the contributions of many skilled practitioners.

To support my practice in this regard, and to further interrogate the variety of techniques and approaches by writers in the industry, I conducted three original interviews with filmmakers and screenwriters in both Europe and the United States. These interviews, which are discussed in Chapter two and found in the appendices, were conducted to establish the methods by which their films were conceived, written and produced, and explores the evolving

role of the screenwriter throughout the production cycle. The decision to use original industrial case studies was because there is a high tendency in academic research to draw on anecdotal and historical case studies from the mainstream film sector to highlight the screenwriter's remit in a production. In many of these case studies, the work of the writer after the commencement of principal photography is overlooked.

As Batty and McAulay state, one issue for the academy, is how the implicit knowledge embodied in an academic screenplay becomes explicit “for the wider community of scholars and/or practitioners” (2016). To this end, I felt that a critical analysis was essential to explicate the knowledge derived from my practice-led research. My analysis draws on the existing research of key theorists in the field and forms part of a wider critical exploration of the field of screenwriting studies. This cyclical blend of critical and practice-led research challenges existing generalisations about the craft of screenwriting, in order to draw conclusions about the role of the writer and the function of the screenplay in a contemporary film culture.

In a broad sense, this research is situated in studies of response criticism, due to the significance I place on the implied reader of screenwriting and on the ways they dictate the craft. More specifically, this research addresses the means by which screenwriters communicate the screen idea to these readers in independent modes of production, in turn illuminating the expanded role of the screenwriter, as well as the unseen contributions of the writer in these models. A more thorough investigation into multimodal screenwriting and alternative approaches to the craft will be reserved for post-doctoral research due to the limited availability in this thesis. For now, the thesis will explore, what Steinberg refers to as, “the untapped resources which bring to light lesser-known writers, screenplays and textual or personal relationships” (cited in Batty 2016, 61). Such an investigation into the role of the writer in these sectors can contribute to a more perfect deconstruction of the script development process, both in the industry and in scholarship, by highlighting the unseen contributions of screenwriters outside of the Hollywood mode of filmmaking.

Practical Research: *At the Crossing*

At the Crossing is a feature-length drama about a young woman, Sofiya, and her teenage sister, Olena, who survive on their grandmother's farm, in a region surrounding a decommissioned nuclear reactor, in the years after a nuclear disaster. Local poachers raid the farm, a problem in that region, and so they are forced to travel across the dangerous and forbidden exclusion zone

around the reactor with one of the young poachers responsible, Anton, to find and retrieve their livestock, and in doing so, save their farm.

The screenplay follows a conventional three-act structure and uses the ‘want’ and ‘need’ trope as a foundation for fostering these two characters across this story. I had researched this story for many years, drawing on inspiration from the Chernobyl disaster of 1986. Much of the focus of my writing was in trying to make the story relatable, and the characters identifiable, to an audience. In the case of this story, the concepts of home, community and environment were used to allow audiences of any background to better engage with a story that is otherwise based on a ‘localised’ incident. Even though the value we place on these concepts differs from person to person, it can activate the reader’s engagement, to allow them to form a connection with the story. Like the reader, each sister has a different, albeit valid, point of view on the crisis. Sofiya is driven by a loyalty to those who came before her, and to her desire to succeed in a place that is forcing her to leave, and this drives Sofiya's journey to retrieve her livestock. Olena, on the other hand, longs to escape this harsh landscape and is driven by a yearning freedom, a curiosity of the outside world and a chance to prosper elsewhere.

The screenplay and other industry-facing documentation allow the reader to elucidate the process of writing for the screen, though, not all the findings of the work are self-evident. Therefore, a more conventional critical mode of research is needed to contextualise further certain aspects of the work undertaken and to support the reader’s understanding of the findings of this practice-led research. This synergy of practice-led research and critical work serves to help deconstruct and rebuild a contemporary model of screenwriting in a production setting, and reveals how the craft is swayed by the cultural and industrial trends of cinema today. The benefits of this method of research are three-fold. Firstly, it allows for a rigorous investigation into screenwriting practice, which in turn can impact the way academics and scholars consider the screenwriting process in film production. The second benefit of this research is that practitioners can learn from alternative methods of script development already in practice in lesser known explored sectors of the craft. The use of multimodal forms (using text, imagery and video), as an example, can provide alternative methods to communicate their screen concept to their implied reader. It argues that a multimodal approach to storytelling can give the writer greater agency when engaging the gatekeepers of the industry, due to the communicative strength of these combined media. Finally, this research respects that not every writer anticipates their work being produced for the screen and appreciates that much screenwriting is conducted in an ‘autonomous’ mode, far removed from industrial influence. Therefore, this thesis can also benefit research into the field of more general creative writing

studies. By encouraging an adoption of self-reflective writing techniques achieved through practice-led research, the writer can reveal new insights into their process as well.

Structure of Critical Thesis

The chapters of this thesis are arranged so as to validate my hypothesis in both a historical and industrial context. It explores screenwriting from a historical point of view, so as to investigate the practices of writers in the earliest days of the craft. This preliminary research lays the foundations for further research which draws on primary sources to investigate contemporary screenwriting practices. The arrangement of these chapters allows for comparisons to be drawn between the practices of the past and present so as to paint a more complete picture of work of writers in the field. These findings are then supported by my own practice-led research and a critical analysis of the work. Though my practice-led research, the screenplay *At the Crossing*, was the first stage in answering my research question, it is presented as the third section of this thesis. This is to provide the reader with a clear and understandable presentation of my research and findings.

It is common for screenwriters, particularly in the United States, to submit their work to screenwriting competitions, as well as to screenwriting agencies, in the hope of selling their work to a major studio. Renowned screenwriting sources, such as the Writer's Store (writersstore.com), or Raindance, suggest that this is possible, thanks to an array of manuals and guides which focus on achieving this end. The Blacklist (blcklst.com), whose website is populated with various Hollywood success stories, further perpetuate the misleading notion that Hollywood is interested in what the unproven screenwriter has to offer. In the *Vanity Fair* article 'When the Spec Script was King', screenwriter and freelance columnist Margaret Heidenry, instead highlights the reality of the commercial screenplay industry in Hollywood (2013). According to the article, the number of speculative screenplays sold to the major studios in 2012 amounted to ninety-six.¹² Heidenry shows that this low figure is not unique to that year, but that it is the average number each year. A recent *Los Angeles Times* article (Erskine, 2018) proclaimed the death of the speculative screenplay and in a rebuttal, the screenwriting website *Screencraft* (Miyamoto, 2018) claimed the industry was alive and well, citing up to date statistics and the sixty-one screenplays sold in 2017. Indeed, the speculative screenplay industry is a dying one, at least from the perspective of the writer, whilst it is a

¹² A speculative screenplay is one written on speculation that it will be sold, and not on commission by a production company.

booming sub-industry of the Hollywood system for companies like Screencraft who trade in consultancy, competitions, software and other essential resources for struggling screenwriters.

A more practical and feasible mode of development is the independent and underground sectors of cinema, where screenwriters do not typically expect to sell their scripts. In this sector, the writer might produce a speculative screenplay and then through a combination of networking and perseverance, find a director, producer or actor to collaborate with in adapting the script for the screen. Understandably, many of these projects will be short films due to the financial and practical restrictions of operating in this sector.

A dispelling of the harmful myths of the industry is necessary. In place of these, a focus on more feasible models of script development can provide more beneficial areas of inquiry. This is achieved through three chapters of critical inquiry as well as practice-based research components, as outlined below.

The objective of Chapter one is to explore the longstanding relationship between evolving production models in the film industry and the form of the screenplay so as to demonstrate how the screenplay is being affected by shifts in digital culture. The chapter begins with an extensive analysis of the historical origins of the screenplay and the ways in which its evolution has been tied to technological advancements in film production. This is to highlight the relationship between the script and the production model of cinema has always existed. The chapter concentrates on the Hollywood model, as this is where much of research in the academy has been conducted, but I also focus on this sector because of the influence that the Hollywood model has had in swaying contemporary script culture.

The chapter also offers a case study of renowned early scenarist Roy L. McCardle; a man heralded as the first professional screenwriter in the American industry. His work in other visual and performative media, such as theatre, journalism and photography, make him an ideal candidate for exploring the culture of screenwriting of this period and its relationship to other media. One of the key points of this chapter is the way in which technological advancements in filmmaking changed the format of the script document itself. The advent of sound, as one example, played a significant impact on the screenplay text, not just because of the inclusion of dialogue as another characteristic of the text, but in what way it affected the formatting decisions of writers. As will be demonstrated, changes like these guided the screenplays current form and has remained as such for almost half a century. Today, many of the attributes of the script document can be traced back to these advancements in both film production and cinematic storytelling. The very form of the script document can in a sense act as a genetic map of the history of the cinema medium. Many of these attributes are outdated and superfluous to

the needs of the practitioner in contemporary cinema, particularly the independent sector. With this in mind, Chapter one will also investigate contemporary scripting practices to explore how the technology and multimedia of contemporary society have advanced screenwriting practice in ways that mirror those of the past.

Alternative scripting practices are explored, particularly the works of filmmakers like the Duplass brothers and the contributions of other filmmakers in the so-called ‘Mumblecore’ movement of cinema. Comic book adaptations in Hollywood, particularly the adaptations of Frank Miller’s body of work, prove an apt case study for the use of visual scripts and multimodal texts instead of traditional screenplays or screenwriters. One of the most revolutionary advancements in the ways that practitioners communicate the screen idea is the crowdfunding campaign page. This chapter will interrogate the ways in which innovative practices, as well as visual and multimodal methods of scripting, can be combined to create an innovative means of pitching the screen idea to what is arguably the new gatekeeper of the industry, the movie going audience. The chapter concludes with a deconstruction of the *Still Life* crowdfunding campaign and the role the writer played in creating this strictly digital production document.

Chapter two investigates the earliest stages of a film’s development, as well as the writer’s role in the pitching of the screen idea to the gatekeepers and, in doing so, sheds light on the commissioning process typically used in low budget productions. This is achieved through the first of three industrial case studies about practicing screenwriters. Robin Mukherjee, the screenwriter on *Lore* (Shortland, 2012), highlights the steps taken by writers to secure financing for their work, his collaboration with the director of the film and the ways in which his role as the writer shifted during the different development stages of the film.

An interview with American filmmaker Jared Moshe about his independent western, *Dead Man’s Burden* (2012) reveals the ways in which a writer/director practitioner can impact their production cycle. Such a dual role is commonplace in independent sectors of cinema, given the freedom that practitioners have to control the course of their productions. This dual role can have significant consequences for how the film is made with the creative documentation such as script, treatment and outlines being directly affected by the budget and schedule, and vice-versa. The final case study that I offer in this chapter is the Hollywood blockbuster, *The Mummy* (Kurtzman 2017). Written in part by actor and screenwriter Dylan Kussman, I interviewed Kussman to understand how the findings these independent case studies compare with the practices at the highest level of the screen industries.

The next section of the thesis showcases the practical component of my research. This comes in the form of a feature length screenplay, *At the Crossing*, and supported by visual material which aided the development of the story as well as other preliminary production notes. These combine to form what I refer to as a ‘visual script’.

Chapter three offers a thorough analysis of the creation of *At the Crossing* as a screen concept. This critical exegesis dissects the academic screenplay text, as well as its accompanying development documentation, which was created to aid in the construction of the narrative. The chapter can be read in two parts. The first is an exploration of the early conceptual stages of the story, embracing an array of non-conformist practices of screenwriting culture. The second part of this chapter describes the re-writing of the script with consideration for ‘industry facing scriptwriting’ demands, where the influences of filmmaking practice, combined with the logistics of fundraising and other industrial pressures, affect the choices of the writer.

The chapter describes my use of multimodal storytelling tools, such as storyboarding, character design sheets, visual pitch trailers and concept posters, to explore the early ideas for the story. These tools played a significant role in helping to realise my vision for the screen idea of *At the Crossing*. The chapter also explores the importance of the implied reader in screenwriting culture and highlights the ways that a broader understanding of the reader, including consumer and spectator habits, can inform the act of writing. This method provides the writer with a far more complex toolkit in communicating the screen idea to an audience of any kind. In this case, I draw on research into identification studies in cinema and explore how these theories could theoretically be applied at the screenwriting stages of the production, to better engage a consumer.

Research into the craft of screenwriting is, after all, as much about understanding the act of re-writing, as it is about the creation of the initial draft. The study of audience and reader-responses in cinema, specifically Carol Clover’s *Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film* (1987), Janet Staiger’s *Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception* (2000), as well as other texts, helped to guide the redrafting process of *At the Crossing*.¹³ Therefore, the next section of this chapter aims to dissect the rewriting of the screenplay in relation to industrial logistics and conformist approaches to the craft. Such an analysis allows us to understand how the creative contributions of the writer can be affected by film production

¹³ Patrick Cattrysse’s article, *The Protagonist’s Dramatic Goals, Wants and Needs*, played an important role in my research (2010).

practices. To situate the script of *At the Crossing* in an industrial setting, I produced an industry standard production schedule and budget to provide a set of production specifications that would dictate further rewrites. These specifications acknowledge factors such as financial restrictions, economical use of locations, visual effects and casting logistics. Each of these issues is a common consideration in a film production and here they played a significant role on the rewriting of the screen idea. The research provides insight into the common factors that affect screenwriters in a film production setting.

The conclusion chapter of this thesis synthesises the findings of the research and offers the reader further avenues of exploration. It reflects on the limits of the research and describes ways that one might continue this line of inquiry as post-doctoral research. Finally, the chapter discusses the future of the craft of screenwriting, with specific attention to the video game medium and the growing acceptance of the professional screenwriter in this sector. Some of my initial hypotheses, which were inspired by Kathryn Millard's prototype for a new way of thinking about the screenplay, mirror my conclusions about alternative methods of screenwriting and functions of the script. Millard's prototype celebrates diversity in the tools and techniques employed by the writer and "places emphasis firmly on the creative process and the generation and development of new ideas rather than pre-determined templates" (2011, 155).

Chapter 1: When Old Practice and New Technology Collide

Introduction

There is a growing trend in the mainstream film industry of screenwriters adopting dual roles in productions, but also of other practitioners acting as screenwriters. In *Jason Bourne* (Greengrass 2016), director Paul Greengrass collaborated with his long-time editor Christopher Rouse to write the film, while Rouse maintained his duties as film editor also. A similar method of development was used in the films of Ben Wheatley, where screenwriter Amy Jump also doubled as the editor for films such as *A Field in England* (Wheatley 2013), *High Rise* (Wheatley 2015) and *Free Fire* (Wheatley 2016). *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (Edwards 2016) credits screenwriters Tony Gilroy and Chris Weitz, but it gives a ‘story by’ credit to John Knoll, the co-production designer of the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, and the visual effects supervisor on this film. It is unusual to hear of visual effects supervisors and production designers adopting such roles., but given the fundamental role that these practitioners play in Hollywood blockbusters, such as the *Star Wars* franchise, there is arguably a place for them at the story development table. This represents a dramatic revision of how screenplays are developed in the industry, and the approach taken by writers who consider collaboration with other practitioners on a production.

In researching the wider contributions of the screenwriter, and the unorthodox methods employed by writers in the creation and communication of the screen idea, it is necessary to give consideration to the industrial origins of the screenplay text. A historical analysis of the craft of screenwriting can further support claims that the writer exhibits an enhanced role in the production of a film, and reveals much about why many screenplay ‘rules’ and conventions exist in a multi-departmental development system. In such productions, the script is accompanied by directors, cast, source material, and conceptual artwork to help in the elaboration of the project. Yet, outside of this model, the screenplay is often the only source for what Ian W. MacDonald refers to as the ‘screen idea’ (2013). In an alternative mode of production, the suitability of the screenplay as a vector to communicate the screen idea alone, can be re-examined, with the aim of suggesting other methods instead.

Research into alternative methods of writing for the screen, such as Millard’s *Screenwriting in a Digital Era* (2014), suggests that the practice of screenwriting has entered an age where an abundance of accessible media can offer new approaches to the adaptation of script to screen, no longer bound by the traditions of old (Millard 2014, 180). Screenwriting

Scholarship has also become a widely accepted field of study in its own right and not simply an offshoot of traditional film studies. This bridging of cultures in both academia and industry can be seen in the recommended reading section of the *Nicholl's Screenwriting Fellowship* site, which features an extensive list of screenwriting manuals, and also several key academic texts. This demonstrates the value and contributions of academic research into screenwriting, which are now being felt at the highest levels of the screenwriting communities ('Screenwriting Resources' n.d.). Innovations in new media technologies, such as flash animation, graphic design programs, and high definition cameras found in a multitude of gadgets ranging from smartphones to handheld video game consoles, has meant that the opportunities for practitioners in the visual arts are numerous.

In *From the Theory and Practice of a Script Writer*, the Russian formalist Osip Brik argues that the script is in no way a literary work, but that it is "a system of cinematic images and devices calculated to make the author or authors' artistic project open out on the screen in the forms of cinematic art" (1974, 96). Though dismissive of the screenplay's status as a literary artefact, he is supportive of the scripts potential to take other forms, besides the written word.

The fact that we do not have any means other than words with which to plan the future film is in no sense intrinsic to the script; rather, it is a defect. In some cases, an expressive photograph can give a fuller idea of the future than long pages of flowery literary script. Scripts are written for the people who will be making the film. An understanding of the film envisaged has to be conveyed to them by all the means available, and for this purpose, literary language is far from the only or the most appropriate means (Brik 1974, 96).

The changing production practices mentioned previously, combined with recent shifts in independent film production, demonstrate that the written word is no longer the only means by which screenwriters can communicate their screen idea to practitioners. Kickstarter fundraising campaigns serve as a contemporary example of Brik's argument. What makes the Kickstarter campaign so interesting from a research perspective is the little attention the screenplay text is given in their creation. An investigation into many successful campaigns suggests that the traditional screenplay is unnecessary in the fundraising process. These campaigns instead rely on social media blurbs, visual pitch trailers, conceptual artwork and a multitude of other media to convey and communicate the screen idea. This is one example of the way in which screenwriting has become a multimodal craft, a method of screenwriting which employs, not

just written texts, but images and sound also (Millard 2014, 180). This can now afford the screenwriter a more diverse toolkit of resources to outline their story.

In this chapter, I will highlight a relationship between the logistical aspects of a film's production cycle and the screenwriting process, and will demonstrate that in fact the screenwriter has always been impacted by changing production trends and models in the film industry. It will begin with an explorative study of the history of screenwriting as a craft, looking specifically at the relationship between the media and technology of the time, and the influence it played on the craft of screenwriting. As Azlant argues, "it is fitting to pursue the origins of the screenplay through film's evolving complexities of materials, features, schemes, and through the backgrounds, attitudes, and activities of the artists attending this evolution" (1997, 228). To this end, I will demonstrate that the development of such production technologies is directly linked to the formalisation and standardisation of the screenplay, but that this evolution is continuing to shape and revise the standards of screenwriting.

The chapter will explore screenwriting and its relationship to new media, looking at the different modes and tools available to the practitioner, but also explore the various avenues of development that these new tools can afford the filmmaker. This can offer new agency to the writer, and offer greater opportunities for filmmakers to develop and adapt their screenplays, where traditionally they would be hindered by restrictive and expensive filmmaking trends. It argues that, due to the restrictions of literary conventions and expectations of minimalistic details, the screenplay on its own is not sufficient to communicate all the complexities and intricacies of a film's visual and audible qualities on the page alone.

This chapter will go on to make the argument that the Kickstarter fundraising page is in itself a new digital addition to the overall screenplay package, just as significant as the treatment or outline. The Kickstarter campaign represents a convergence of digital culture which theorists like Henry Jenkins speak of, and traditional film practices which have changed the nature of screenwriting, and unsettled it from its positions both in scholarship and in the eyes of the wider film community.¹⁴ An industrial case study, a short film called *Still Life* (Mac Coille 2014), will support this argument. The film was written as a speculative screenplay and produced using funding that was raised through an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign. The campaign employed many of the same tools that have already been described, making it an ideal case study for demonstrating the ways that screenwriters can now employ alternative tools

¹⁴ Jenkins writes about this subject in *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (Jenkins 2006).

to the written word, as well as other technologies, such as social media and video, in the development and communication of the screen idea.

The Longstanding Relationship Between Media and Screenwriting

This section looks at the ways in which the screenplay has evolved since the late 19th century and early 20th century, and explores its relationship to the technology that surrounds it in the wider film industry. It will begin by addressing the formalisation of the screenplay in the early studio system of Hollywood, and also broaches some of the more unconventional approaches to the craft, particularly the use of other media in screenwriting from that period. Research into this period can reveal some of the underlying motivations of the screenplay's form, particularly its connection to other technologies. More significantly, it can provide a foundation from which scholars can study the relationship between screenwriting and technology in a contemporary industry. The section concludes with a look at how changing production practices in the industry influence the way in which we now perceive the screenplay in screenwriting culture.

In exploring the evolution of the craft of screenwriting, it is useful to begin with the etymology of the term 'screenplay'. As Maras reminds us, the term 'screen play', an earlier derivative of the word, refers to the film as a "visual performed object, or exhibited entity, much like its earlier counterpart term 'photoplay'" (Maras 2009, 82).

The screen play did not simply or instantaneously switch from being a performed and filmed object to a written one. The appropriate conditions needed to arise for a shift in textuality from image to word to happen. Some of these are linked to changing understandings of the art of the photoplay...; others relate to credit practices and institutional politics (Maras 2009, 83).

To Maras' list of influences, we can also add technological advancements, such as innovations in camera technology, and the advent of sound. As the newspaper article is dependent on the printing press, so too is the screenplay bound to the production practices of filmmaking. To help understand better the formalisation of the screenplay, it is useful to identify the technological advancements of the time that helped influence its shape. Conversely, as scholars of screenwriting and film history remind us, it's hard to conduct such an investigation that seeks to revisit the earliest filmmaking attempts, as many, if not all the screenplays of that earliest period of the cinema have been lost to us. Such a task is made more difficult by the long-held belief that no screenplays were used in that period, with filmmakers instead employing an improvised approach (Raynauld 1997, 257). Such a notion has since been disproven (Maras

2009: 28). Some key theorists in the field have attempted to collate what surviving works there are, and present us with a clearer timeline. Steven Price, Steven Maras, David Bordwell & Kristin Thompson, Janet Staiger, Edward Azlant, Patrick Loughney, Isabelle Raynauld, and Tom Stempel, have all written about the origins of the classical cinema, and the primitive cinema. Their research provides a foundation of historical insight that will allow me to build my research into contemporary practices.

The cinema of that period, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, was, as Tom Gunning terms, a “cinema of attractions” (1986), one that was not built on narrative but on the prospect of looking. Many of these films were actuality films, rather than fictional, “placing the world within one’s reach” (Gunning 1986, 64). As fictional films became more popular with spectators, a greater degree of planning and preparatory documentation was needed in the form of the scenario. The scenario of this period was largely informal, adhering to no strict guidelines or structure. Anecdotal evidence reveals that structure and presentation were not given the importance it is given today, but this is natural given the size of films at that time. The scenarios were understandably short, and many doubled as marketing tools, being employed as advertisements for the films. Loughney suggests that this doubling of the scenario as both script for copyright purposes, and as marketing material, became standard practice around 1904 (1997, 285). This duality that the scenario exhibited then suggests the methods and stylistic choices of the writer, not just writing for themselves, but also for an implied reader or audience.

The appeal of cinema at this point is arguably linked to the technology it employed, guided by technological pioneers such as Thomas Edison. The camera was the main attraction for new filmmakers, and the construction of a narrative was placed secondary to this new creative tool. The scenario was lacking in any formalisation during this period of the “cameraman system” (Staiger, cited in Price 2013, 55), where the filmmaker was writer, director, and cinematographer, with each filmmaker adopting their preferred methods of writing.

The modus operandi of the filmmakers of this period is one steeped in the multi-media of the time, whether that be journalism, radio, theatre, or literature. The earliest screenwriters then naturally emerged from this media-rich culture, bringing their expertise in graphic arts, and the many other professions above in the media, to the growing medium of cinema (Azlant 1997, 249). In his book, *A History of the Screenplay* (2013), Price refers to the “accidental” nature of screenwriting’s origins, “stage plays and newspaper articles that were not written with films in mind” (2013, 25), but that would come to play a pivotal role in the creation of early films. One of the earliest examples of the filmmaker explicitly borrowing from other media in

the construction of their narrative, was the Sigmund Lubin re-enactment of the Corbett-Fitzsimmons heavyweight boxing championship fight in 1897. As Azlant explains, “Lubin employed two local stevedores to re-enact the fight in Philadelphia, on instruction from a ‘director’, who prompted the fighters from a round-by-round newspaper account of the actual fight” (1997, 229).

The scenario’s relationship to other media of the time can also be credited with playing a key role in establishing its status as a legal document in the overall production. I refer to the copyrighting of scenarios in the early 1900s. Loughney highlights one case in particular during the early 1900s which reveals the scenarist’s dependency on other forms of writing. One example is AM&B’s attempt to register the scenario for *The Suburbanite* (McCutcheon 1904) with The Copyright Office. “The Copyright Office, thinking that the bulletin was not a true dramatic composition because it lacked dialogue, replied to AM&B that it would be more proper to register the work as a ‘book’ than a play” (Loughney 1997, 284). Loughney posits that because the scenario of that period (1904-05) lacked in any formality, it was not considered worthy enough of creative recognition, and therefore deemed unworthy of the same legal protections afforded other media, such as the stage play (1997, 284). One of the ways in which studios bypassed this issue was to embrace the existing structures of other media. Soon AM&B’s scenarios were modelled after the dramatic play (Price 2013, 50). Another significant legal milestone in the industry happened after the 1907 production of *Ben Hur* (Morey, Olcott, & Rose) became the subject of a copyright infringement lawsuit. The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately ruled against the producers of the film, and from that point onwards, all adaptations were required to secure the necessary clearances. Loughney highlights this case “because of the impetus it gave to formalising the profession of screenwriting after 1907, when the suit was initiated (1997, 285). Price also argues that this question of legality surrounding the screenplay “brought into being, both conceptually and formally, the very idea of what we would term the screenplay” (2013, 38).

These examples reveal that one of the biggest influences on the writer of the day was the stage play. Cases such as Salmi Morse’s doomed *Passion Play* (1879) being adapted for the screen (Vincent, 1898) with greater success, has helped foster the relationship that exists even today between the theatre and the cinema. Literary writers found it difficult to become part of this growing movement of storytellers being hired to work for production companies. Screenwriting at that time was not considered a literary craft, and understandably so. The scenario was clinical and cold and treated as an organisational tool. Worse still, the technological and multi-modal aspects of the film production made it difficult for literary

writers to migrate into the motion picture industry. As Price explains, the suggestions for literary based scenarios that the studios received, “were developed in the studio into scripts, since few of the writers possessed the knowledge of picture-making requisite to enable them to develop the script” (2013, 55). The studios needed visual thinkers.

The increasing complexity of film narratives, combined with the formalisation of distribution and exhibition standards, meant that filmmakers had to change their approach to the craft, warranting the need for “clearer preparation at the writing stage” (Price 2013, 56). Roy L. McCardell, a celebrated scenarist of this ‘director-unit’ system, holds the distinction of being the first person hired by a studio, the Biograph Company, to write specifically for the pictures (Loughney 1997, 281). Aside from being a pioneer in this growing sector of the arts, McCardell is fascinating because of his background in writing for magazines and his use of media in his writing prior to becoming a screenwriter. McCardell was a journalist with the *Birmingham Age-Herald*, *The New York Evening Sun*, *Puck*, *The New York World*, and *The New York Sunday Telegraph*, while contributing poetry and prose to *Pearson’s*, *Everybody’s*, *Harper’s*, and *Century*. He was a novelist, as well as writing musicals and dramas for the stage. At *The New York World*, McCardell shared credit for the introduction of the first colour page comic supplement. He wrote serialised stories about everyday New York life, and his impact on readers was strong, receiving outpours of letters from the public. McCardell wrote captions for his comic spreads, and as renowned scenarist of the time Epes Winthrop Sargent recalls, “he and the boss would hire a lot of models – mostly girls – and go out and make pictures for the captions” (Sargent, cited in Azlant 1997, 231). The publications featured photo illustrations, “often illustrating make-up or costume sequences or key scenes of current theatrical entertainments” (Azlant 1997, 231). It was this “vital synthesis of cartoon sequencing, photography and narrative conceit” that is believed to be what attracted Biograph to recruit McCardell to write for the mutoscope (Azlant 1997, 232). His extremely high salary of two hundred dollars a week led to a rush of other journalists looking to join the ranks of the film industry (Stempel 2000, 5). Though he would leave Biograph within a year, McCardell would go on to have great success writing scenarios for nearly every studio producer on a freelance basis, and during this period, McCardell still maintained his interest in other media, writing plays, novels, and illustrated magazine publications.

McCardell was clearly a prolific screenwriter who emerged from and maintained contact with many forms of popular media. He brought to film concrete experience in the creation of comic strips, popular Broadway musicals and comedies, newspaper vignettes and serials, poetry, narrative photography, and popular fiction, not to mention

an awareness of the vicissitudes of writing in an institutional context like the daily newspaper (Azlant 1997, 234).

McCardell's photo stories with captions, which were printed in magazines, resemble the storyboarding techniques of many filmmakers today, many of which involve live action previsualisation techniques. The techniques that filmmakers employ to help realise or complete the screenplay text mirror the early storytelling techniques of McCardell and others of his time, and these techniques no doubt helped them to refine their capacity for visual thinking, something which made them ideal for working in the visual arts. The scenario writers of these early years were inventive with this visual vocabulary that they developed and honed outside of the industry.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that it was a positive time to be a screenwriter in the industry, during the early 1900s, with writers receiving greater responsibility on the production. Frank Woods, a scenarist and collaborator with D.W. Griffith was asked to sit in on rehearsals and even received a co-author credit (Woods, cited in Stempel 2000, 23). In an otherwise male-dominated industry, June Mathis broke out as one of the best-known female screenwriters of the early 20s. Not just a prolific scenarist of her time, Mathis was also involved in the other aspects of production. Her eye for casting even led to the then little-known Rudolph Valentino being cast in the role that made him a star (Stempel 2000, 55).

Today the segregated approach to screenwriting, a craft separated from other departments, means that screenwriters are now discouraged from engaging with other aspects of filmmaking in the creation of their ideas. Unlike McCardell and others of his time, many contemporary screenwriters are now wholly unfamiliar with editing techniques, or the paradigms of cinematography, due to this departmentalised production model that places such a heavy emphasis on the written word. Worse still, this lack of technical literacy exhibited by writers is deemed acceptable and the norm. The creation of the Writer's Guild of America can also be credited, or blamed, for encouraging and institutionalising this narrow view of the craft. Though founded on the principles of "strength through unity" (Stempel 2000, 142), it also served to regulate the writer's responsibility. The opportunities for writers to engage with other departments, as described earlier, would no longer become a possibility, as the guild became more involved in the contractual obligations of writers. It was an idealistic endeavour, and one which Stempel feels "has been from the very beginning an impossible ideal in the real world of the movie business" (2000, 143). It is also an endeavour which restricted the creativity of the writer, and more significantly, one that damaged the view of the screenwriter in the wider

culture of filmmaking. It dispelled with the view of screenwriters as ‘filmmakers’ in the broad sense, and instilled the title of ‘writer’ in the stricter sense.

Changing Technologies Informing Screenwriting

Changing technologies, such as the advent of synchronised sound in filmmaking, are frequently credited with having a large influence on the formalisation of screenwriting, but, there are other influences which extend before the era of the ‘talkie’. One example that I wish to focus on here is the use of title cards in the silent-era productions, something that is treated as a curiosity by screenwriting scholars, but one that offers great insight into the branching avenues of screenwriting.

The writing of titles was considered a sub-division in the overall writing of the film (Stempel 2000, 35). Interestingly, it was not the job of the scenarist to conceive the title cards; rather it was the role of a different writer, tasked to form the necessary story points that the visuals of the film would not clearly be able to articulate. The lack of synchronised sound in these pictures placed a heavy burden on the title cards to convey key points of information in a fast and evocative manner for the viewer. To achieve this, the authors of these cards were forced to lean on a mode of writing that was previously discounted by scenarists, as Stempel describes:

Titles soon attempted to duplicate literature, or at least steal from it. In the 1912 Edison production of *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, most of the titles are lines from the poem on which the film was based. When Griffith produced *Judith of Bethulia*, his first four-reeler, in 1913, he wanted something more elaborate in the titles, so Frank Woods “phrased the captions in the style of the language of the day,” according to Mrs Griffith (2000, 36).

According to Stempel’s research, the writing of titles was an area “where writers of a more literary bent could function successfully” (2000, 37). Despite the view that title cards were not considered part of the official scenario text, they were very much a part of the screenwriting process, in that they performed a vital storytelling function for the audience. More importantly, they were a literal form of writing *for* the screen. The necessity of the title card writer was eventually questioned with the inevitable arrival of synchronised sound, as a mainstay in cinema. Not only did such a technological advancement pose a difficult challenge for scenarists, who up to this point had to rely solely on plotting visually dramatic experiences for the viewer, it also threatened to make this section of the screenwriting process obsolete.

Azlant suggests that the increased complexity of narrative and filmmaking techniques, combined with an ever-evolving studio system, “helped institutionalise screenwriting” (1997, 239), and affirm its place in the wider film landscape. This also led to an arguably dangerous dependency on the script to function as a blueprint for the filmmaking process as well (Azlant 1997, 246). This shift, from story document to production blueprint, occurred in the mid-to-late 1920s, when Thomas Ince, an American silent film producer and director, revolutionised the film industry by adopting an assembly line approach to filmmaking, and introducing what we now refer to as the producer-driven system, with the continuity script as its engine (Price 2013, 75).

That process was planned, and the plans, which existed on paper in a variety of forms, were subjected to oversight (or interference, depending on one’s point of view) by managers. A manager could be, as in Ince’s case, the head of the studio, or he could be a supervisor, or production supervisor, or producer. And one of the written forms the producers used as a method of control was the written script (Stempel 2000, 51).

According to Price, this created “a more centralised mode of production whereby the studio maintained quality and economic control over the multi-reel ‘features’ that had now become the norm for narrative filmmaking” (2013, 76). Ultimately, the ‘talkie’ represented a shift to a more complex method of film production, one that required greater attention in the pre-production stage. It proved to be the catalyst that would propel the heterogeneous format of the script into a formalised mode of writing, thus distancing itself from the other forms of media that proved so influential in its original form.

The Question of Formatting

The rise of an amateur community of screenwriting, combined with the array of how-to guides and manuals flooding the market, also played a key factor in the formalisation of screenwriting. Studios actively appealed to the wider community for scenario submissions, something which Stempel calls “scenario fever” (2000, 13). By 1915, some 238 scenario ideas were purchased by the Biograph Company, prompting an entire sub-industry to be developed outside of the Hollywood system, where those in the know were capitalising on the public’s fascination with the motion picture industry. These publications offered a sense of the rules and conventions in the system, despite the fact that even among the studios there existed no clear approach to the craft. B.P. Schulberg, one of many professionals who held a critical view of this so-called scenario fever, highlights the hypocrisy of this sub-industry:

Those four flushers who had never been inside a film studio – such as they were – or had never seen a scenario were posing as old masters and pocketing fifty to sixty dollars a week, real money in those days. I would have to read these “corrected” scenarios, and often they were worse than the originals (cited in Stempel 2000, 15).

Despite the negative view that many had for this aspect of screenwriting culture, it served as a valuable educational platform for newcomers to learn the craft. According to Price, the professional demands of the continuity script at this time only heightened the rush of manuals from experts who claimed to be able to teach the secrets of the trade to the public for a fee (2013, 54). Though there was still no agreed format among the different studios of the time, the manuals and guides did instil a formal approach to the craft in the amateur community.

The conversion to sound resulted in a slew of formats and approaches to the writing and formatting of dialogue (Price 2013, 140). Nevertheless, even as far as the 1950s, no clear agreement could be made among studios as to how to universally format the screenplay, as evidenced by the scripts of the time. An analysis of two key texts of that period, *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder 1950) and *On the Waterfront* (Kazan 1954), reveals a stark contrast in the way these scripts are structured.

Charles Brackett
Billy Wilder

SUNSET BOULEVARD

SEQUENCE "A"

A-1-4 START the picture with the actual street sign:
SUNSET BOULEVARD, stencilled on a curbstone.
In the gutter lie dead leaves, scraps of paper,
burnt matches and cigarette butts. It is early
morning.

Now the CAMERA leaves the sign and MOVES EAST, the
grey asphalt of the street filling the screen. As
speed accelerates to around 40 m.p.h., traffic de-
marcations, white arrows, speed-limit warnings, man-
hole covers, etc., flash by. SUPERIMPOSED on all
this are the CREDIT TITLES, in the stencilled style
of the street sign.

Over the scene we now hear
sirens. Police squad cars
hurtle toward the camera,
turn off the road into a
driveway with squealing
brakes. Dismounted motor-
cycle cops stand directing
the cars in.

A-5 PATIO AND POOL OF
MANSION

The policemen and news-
paper reporters and
photographers have
jumped out of the cars
and are running up to
the pool, in which a
body is seen floating.
Photographers' bulbs
flash in rapid suc-
cession.

MAN'S VOICE

Yes, this is Sunset
Boulevard, Los Angeles,
California. It's about
five o'clock in the
morning. That's the
Homicide Squad, com-
plete with detectives
and newspaper men.
A murder has been re-
ported from one of those
great big houses in the
ten thousand block.
You'll read all about
it in the late editions,
I'm sure. You'll get
it over your radio,
and see it on tele-
vision -- because an
old-time star is in-
volved, one of the big-
gest. But before you
hear it all distorted
and blown out of pro-
portion, before those
Hollywood columnists
get their hands on it,
maybe you'd like to
hear the facts, the
whole truth

Figure 3: An extract from *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder 1950).

FADE IN:

1 EXT-ESTABLISHING SHOT-WATERFRONT-NIGHT 1

Shooting toward a small building (Hoboken Yacht Club) set upon a wharf floating about twenty-five yards off shore. A long, narrow gangplank leads from the wharf to the shore, and on either side of the wharf are large ocean liners which are being unloaded by arc light. In the B.G. is the glittering New York skyline. A great liner, blazing with light, is headed down river. A ferry chugs across to Manhattan. There is a counterpoint of ships' whistles, some shrill, others hauntingly muted.

2 CLOSER SHOT-SMALL BUILDING-ON WHARF-NIGHT 2

It is the office of the longshoremen's local for this section of waterfront. Coming along the gangplank toward the shore is an isolated figure. He is TERRY MALLOY, a wiry, jaunty, waterfront hanger-on in his late twenties. He wears a turtleneck sweater, a windbreaker and a cap.

He whistles a familiar Irish song.

3 SERIES OF WALKING SHOTS-TERRY MALLOY-WATERFRONT-NIGHT 3

Reaching the shore and turning away from the union office. Passing the burned-out piers.

Turning up a waterfront tenement street lit by a dim street lamp that throws an eerie beam. He is holding something inside his jacket but we cannot see what it is.

NOTE: MAIN TITLES TO BE SUPERIMPOSED OVER THIS SERIES OF SHOTS

4 EXT-WATERFRONT STREET-NIGHT 4

Terry walks along until he reaches an ancient tenement where he stops, hesitates, looks up toward the top of the building, and putting his fingers to his mouth lets out a shrill, effective whistle that echoes up the quiet street. Then he cups his hands to his mouth and shouts:

TERRY
Hey Joey! Joey Doyle!

Figure 4: An excerpt from *On the Waterfront* (Kazan 1954).

An analysis of the screenplay form today reveals many traits and conventions whose origins can be traced back to this turbulent time where the screenplay's identity was still in question. Many of these traits are arguably outdated or unnecessary now. For example, the acknowledged font of the screenplay, 12-point Courier, is a clear reference to the scripts of old. Kathryn Millard explains, "the packaging of Courier with the first PCs ensured that users would be able to replicate typewriter-looking documents, enabling a smooth transition to the new era of word processing and personal computing" (2014, 34). Screenplays are expected to introduce character names for the first time in the upper case. Perhaps this was a convention used for directors or actors to take note of important characters, but it is by no means a vital component of a script, especially considering that no work of traditional literature would conform to this same trend. The use of upper case when referring to sound effects on the page is again a tribute to editors or sound designers who quickly needed to identify audio for a scene. The notion that one page of the screenplay is equal to a minute of screen time is also one that is regularly debated by screenwriting scholars and practitioners alike. In practical terms, it is a convention that is almost impossible to adhere to, if we accept that the screenplay is a fluid document that will change on set or in editing.

The explanation for why the screenplay evolved in the manner that it did, can be found at a gathering of the Research Council, Quarterly Meeting in 1932. The primary goal of this meeting was to agree on a single structure or "form of script that will be most legible, graphic, and convenient in practical use" (Price 2013, 147). It appears that the strict conventions that writers follow exist to cater to a period of filmmaking that could not fathom the independent branches of cinema that would arrive later, nor the digital revolution that would revise many of the codes and practices of filmmaking today. It is an old method which has informed an "ancillary industry of infotainment seminars, consultancies and how-to-write-a-screenplay manuals" (Millard 2014, 180), and a method of writing which Millard considers "unsustainable" (2014, 180).

History has shown how technological innovations have propelled the screenplay into new and uncertain states. The evolving technologies of today signal further uncertainties for the writer, notably a revival of the practices of old. Digital multimedia tools have presented filmmakers with a fresh way to convey their screen idea, encouraging a familiarity with various forms of media technologies, and taking emphasis away from the conventional screenplay as a means of doing so. These new modes of communication and storytelling challenge the traditional form of the screenplay and no longer require the complexities of a theatrical film, a television series, or a video game to be communicated in a single document. These alternative

technologies offer the screenwriter a freedom, shared by the scenarists of the early years of cinema, to develop their screen ideas in the most appropriate manner for their productions, but to also better communicate the screen idea to their implied reader, whether a director, actor or any other practitioner on the production. The following sections will explore this new technology and the way it is impacting the writing process.

The Digital Screenplay

In the previous section, I attempted to establish a relationship between changing filmmaking technologies and the screenplay form by highlighting the impact that technological advances in filmmaking had on the practice of screenwriting in the early 20th century. I used historical examples to show the role that other media outside of cinema have played on informing not only the script itself, but the writer and their process, in what was arguably one of the most creative periods for the writer in the history of the cinema. Now I will explore the screenplay in contemporary cinema, looking specifically at the extent that digital technology has further informed the screenplay's shape.

The advent of digital technology has given rise to a variety of industries, including video game design, online streaming services for film and television, and a host of tools available for content creation, which employ production design documents similar to the screenplay. In theory, the screenplay can represent a production document for any form of visual media. The benefits of this redefinition are many, not just from a practitioner's point of view, where employment is a key concern. It also affords the scholar a broader canvas from which to conduct research, no longer limited just to the film industry. Accepting the screenplay as an open document, not bound to a single visual media or a single form can have ramifications for how we theorise the screenplay in the academy.

The digital tools available to the filmmaker have unwittingly changed the culture of filmmaking, and naturally, screenwriting. In fact, the digital screenplay is a far more complex idea now. It does not exist in a physical form, and can theoretically exist as a continuously changing draft if the writer chooses, one that is never 'final' in the strictest sense, overwriting the previous work, and questioning what we consider to be a draft. The writing of the digital script requires a degree of literacy beyond that of spoken and written language. It requires a technological literacy. Screenwriting software, such as Final Draft and Celtx, remove the arduous task of formatting the page on traditional word processors, but they also foster a reliance on these tools and a culture of complacency among screenwriters who follow the codes and conventions of mainstream screenwriting without question. Furthermore, these programs

fail to acknowledge the potential for the screenplay in video game design, the web series, various independent avenues of cinema and television, or animation. They force a one-size-fits-all model on the writer that resembles the screenplay of old. The virtual screenplay remains as such only until it is required to become a printed and physical script again.

The independent sectors of cinema have now become a haven for experimentation both at the production stage, but also in the pre-production stage, and in these corners of cinema the screenplay has found new life.

Alternative Approaches to the Screenplay

Independent cinema around the world has become a fountain of innovative practices and technological revolution. Discourses surrounding the independent sector of cinema has, in the past, revolved around distribution trends and general production patterns, but rarely discusses the role that the screenplay has to play in the production.¹⁵ This section will explore some of the unorthodox methods of screenwriting employed by filmmakers in independent cinema, as well as draw comparisons back to the early days of scenario writing, as investigated at the beginning of this chapter.

The ‘mumblecore’ movement of the early 21st century in American independent cinema, yielded a series of ultra-low-budget films that employed minimal crew and cast and favouring a docu-drama style.¹⁶ The characteristics of these films include low budget production qualities, predominantly amateur actors, and an emphasis on naturalistic dialogue. The films are made using digital technology, in keeping with the low-budget nature of the productions, and this purely digital way of making films offered a level of freedom in how the screenplay was and is still used, in the production process. In many instances, filmmakers “avoid using traditional screenplays in making their films” (Murphy 2010, 175). This natural and improvisational nature of mumblecore is of particular interest to screenwriting scholars who call into question the necessity of the screenplay in these digital movements, a decision taken by many acclaimed independent filmmakers as well.

Indeed, some of the most notable American indie film-makers – Gus Van Sant, David Lynch and Jim Jarmusch – have employed alternative strategies to the screenplay in

¹⁵ Geoff King’s extensive research into independent cinema is one example which demonstrates this issue (2005).

¹⁶ Mumblecore was a movement of films that were created in a similar period, with stories that reflected the real lives of the people who were making them. According to the filmmakers who pioneered this movement, the production model employed in these films was not a response to the limitations available to them at the time; rather it was chosen because it fitted the real and everyday stories they wanted to tell (Weiss 2010).

such recent films as *Elephant* (2003), *Inland Empire* (2006) and *The Limits of Control* (2009) (2010, 175).

Humpday (Shelton 2009) is another key example of experimental approaches at a screenplay level, encouraged from the beginning of production. Director Lynn Shelton explains, "one of the main things would be instead of trying to write a script and find people from a very large pool to fit that vision, to start with people you want to work with and then invite them to develop their own characters" (Shelton, cited in Guerrasio 2009). This is not to say that improvisation and experimentation with the screenplay is a key factor in defining mumblecore films. The Duplass Brothers, figureheads in the mumblecore movement, dispel the notion that mumblecore films rely on improvisation entirely, without consideration for the screenplay in the early stages of development (Boone 2013). Nevertheless, the mumblecore movement represents a new philosophy of filmmaking, embraced by a new generation of filmmakers.

The ultra-low budget methods of film production are not the only avenues where experimentation with the screenplay is evident. Though relatively rare, there are pockets of the mainstream industry that foster this same type of creativity in the writing process. Robert Rodriguez, who rose to fame in the independent film festival circuit with similar filmmakers such as Quentin Tarantino and John Singleton, has since become a supporter of digital technology in cinema. He has garnered a reputation as a 'rebel' in Hollywood for breaking the rules and incurring the anger of the various guilds and associations there also.¹⁷ His work has also set a new precedent in the industry as to how filmmakers employ visual screenplays in the production of their films. For the production of *Sin City* (2004), Rodriguez teamed with the author of the source graphic novel, Frank Miller, to co-direct the film. To be allowed to work with Miller, a non-unionised filmmaker, Rodriguez relinquished his Director's Guild of America membership to turn what was to become one of the most talked about Hollywood movies of the year into a genuinely independent venture. The film, which was shot entirely on a green screen stage and using digital cameras, made significant use of the *Sin City* graphic novels in its production.

¹⁷ Rodriguez wrote a book entitled *Rebel Without a Crew* (1996) which documented his so called 'one-man-band' approach to filmmaking.



Figure 5: *Sin City* (2004) graphic novel/film comparison

The graphic novels were used as a reference on set, and many of the shots of the film were framed to match the panels of the page. As Rodriguez explains, “I started really looking at it as, instead of trying to turn it into a movie, which would be terrible, let’s take cinema, and try and make it into this book. Because the mediums really are very similar” (Rodriguez 2004). Dialogue, for the most part, was also lifted directly from the source material. The role of a traditional screenwriter was so unnecessary in the production that they intentionally chose not to acknowledge it in the opening and closing credits. This, in turn, inspired director Zach Snyder to make similar use of the source material for his adaptations of Frank Miller’s *300* (Varley & Miller 1999), and Alan Moore’s *Watchmen* (1986).

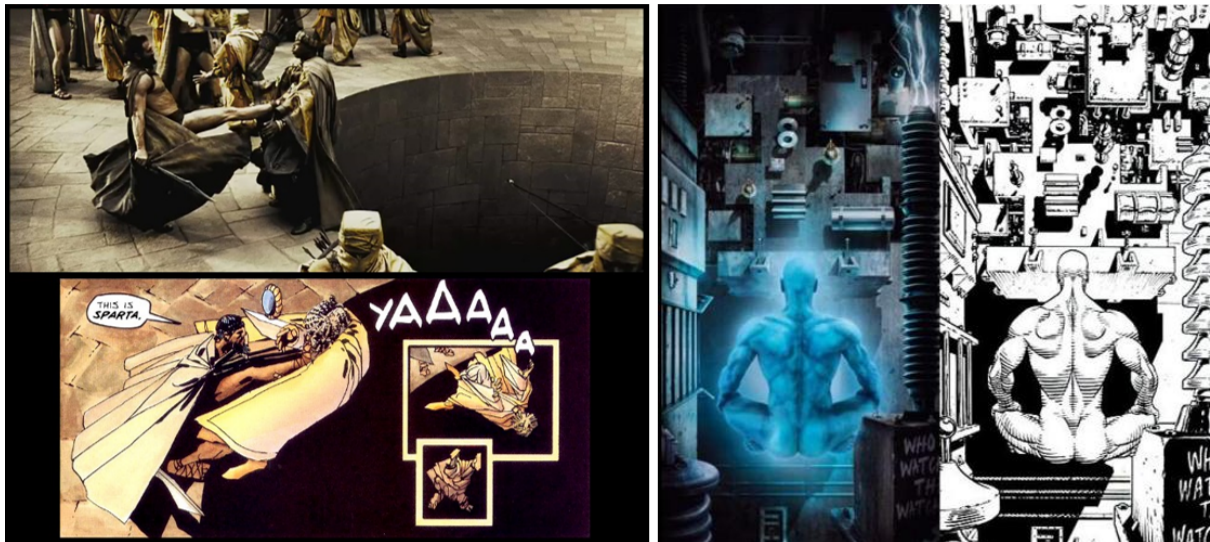


Figure 6: *Watchmen* (2009) and *300* (2006) graphic novel/film comparisons

Though Snyder's films included a traditional screenplay in both productions, they were complemented by the visual qualities of the source material in the adaptation from page to screen, as seen above.

These examples of scripting offer a departure from the traditional method which has dominated film practice for so long. What each of these represents, is an embracing of technology and media in the development of visual art, thus encouraging screenwriters to become equally innovative in the development of the story. Given the success of these particular examples, it is easy to dismiss the screenplay for these other tools. However, these examples prove that the role of the screenplay in the early development is still vital to the process, if only as a document to outline the various steps of the film's production. It is the form of the script that is being called into question here, the traditional form that has become so familiar to writers. The form that filmmakers, such as Rodriguez and Snyder, embrace here use visual tools not only to convey a sense of the screen idea but to allow us to visualise this idea with the appropriate visual vocabulary, in a way befitting the medium of cinema. In this way, the scripting process takes a visual and a digital form. It demonstrates that the line between writer and filmmaker is fading, as the tools and techniques of both professions converge towards each other.

In the next section, I will discuss the ways that crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo have given the filmmaker a new method of engaging with and communicating the screen idea to audiences, using a host of different media tools and services. It argues that the crowdfunding page can become an equally valid production document in the digital screenplay package.

Crowdsourcing Platforms as a Digital Vector for the Screen Idea

Originating from a “grassroots ethos” (Munt 2014, 328), the crowdfunding campaign has become a mainstay of independent film culture. Crowdfunding is a means of fundraising by appealing to the wider public for donations, typically using online services such as social media, or dedicated crowdfunding platforms like those mentioned above. In recent years, it has become a popular method of raising funds for various types of projects, particularly those in the creative arts. The crowdfunding campaign is arguably the most significant cultural shift in film production, one which has also heralded the greatest degree of independence for the filmmaker and helped realise the democratisation of cinema. Commonly referred to as ‘Kickstarter’ for shorthand, due to the success of the Kickstarter brand in film funding campaigns, the crowdfunding campaign has allowed filmmakers, ranging from micro-budget shorts to million dollar features, to successfully realise their work with a degree of freedom that could not have been achieved in the ‘design-by-committee’ environment of a commercial production company.

The Kickstarter represents the culmination of a variety of significant shifts in digital communication, whether it is the advent of high-quality video streaming, ‘vlogging’, and one to one engagement with consumers, or the use of social media to foster interactivity between creator and consumer. The start-up culture that is inherent in most of the technologies we use in the Web 2.0 era have become synonymous with the crowdfunding campaign also, and many filmmakers have embraced an entrepreneurial mind-set in their pursuit of success. Similar to entrepreneurs, producers employ publicity stunts and viral marketing campaigns to get the attention of the gatekeepers, who, as King explains, are no longer the studio executive or the agent, but rather those in a position of influence or power in the online sphere (King 2013, 87). That isn’t to say that the gatekeepers have become easier to bypass. Such publicity campaigns can be entirely justified to compete in this oversaturated market, where everyone wants to take advantage of these new technologies and this new crowdfunding arena. The goal for filmmakers is to get their crowdfunding campaigns to pass the “tipping point” threshold (Gladwell, cited in King 2013, 101), where word of mouth then becomes a “self-fulfilling dynamic” (King 2013, 101). King and Gladwell are referring to the phenomenon of ‘going viral’, where the public begins sharing and promoting an artistic work, or in this instance, a cause, without the need for the authors or organisers to keep actively promoting it. But, ‘going viral’ is easier said than done, and in many instances, the feature film has less success than other media in meeting its funding goals (King 2013, 92). Many successful feature campaigns particularly on the higher budget end, have exploited the celebrity status of their productions

to ensure success. This has been met with backlash from the film community, in particular producer Dana Brunetti (House of Cards 2012), who scolded such high-profile filmmakers for rerouting finance “away from the little guys, who actually need the funding” (Eordogh 2014).

Crowdfunding is significant also because it is a “web-based partnership” (King 2013, 88), between the filmmaker and their audience. It establishes an ongoing dialogue between creator and consumer, something which is unprecedented in film history. However, the crowdfunding campaign is not a replacement for the traditional models of fundraising in the film industry, where networking and industry credentials are key. Rather it is a companion to these models, one that allows filmmakers the chance to finance the project, or at least a portion of a project, on their terms. It goes some way to helping the filmmaker maintain partial independence at a time when an executive or commissioning editor might be demanding the artist to make creative sacrifices with aspects of the story for a budget friendly production. The crowdfunding campaign can also function as a digital production document, one where the screenwriter can employ a variety of multimedia tools to better communicate the screen idea to the gatekeepers, the audience.

The most successful platform is Kickstarter. Unlike many other forms of fundraising, Kickstarter campaigns do not seek ‘investors’, rather they seek ‘backers’. The term investor can be troubling as it implies that the investor will see a return for their financial support. Rather a ‘backer’ should support a project because they believe in the idea and would like to see such a project realised. That is not to say that backers are not rewarded for their support. Crowdfunding campaigns are expected to offer some reward, even if just a ‘thank you’ credit. In the independent film communities, crowdfunding has become one of the key sources of securing financial support. Many films have a better chance of going into production than if they followed the traditional route of seeking funding from a national film organisation such as the BFI or the Irish Film Board, or by seeking investment from mainstream film producers.

Kickstarter has also been used as a vehicle by mainstream artists as a way of proving marketplace value for an otherwise struggling Hollywood project. In April 2013, director Rob Thomas launched a Kickstarter campaign to fund a feature film adaptation of the cancelled television series *Veronica Mars* (Thomas 2004-2007). The campaign raised \$5.7 million from a total of 91,585 backers around the world (Dredge 2014).

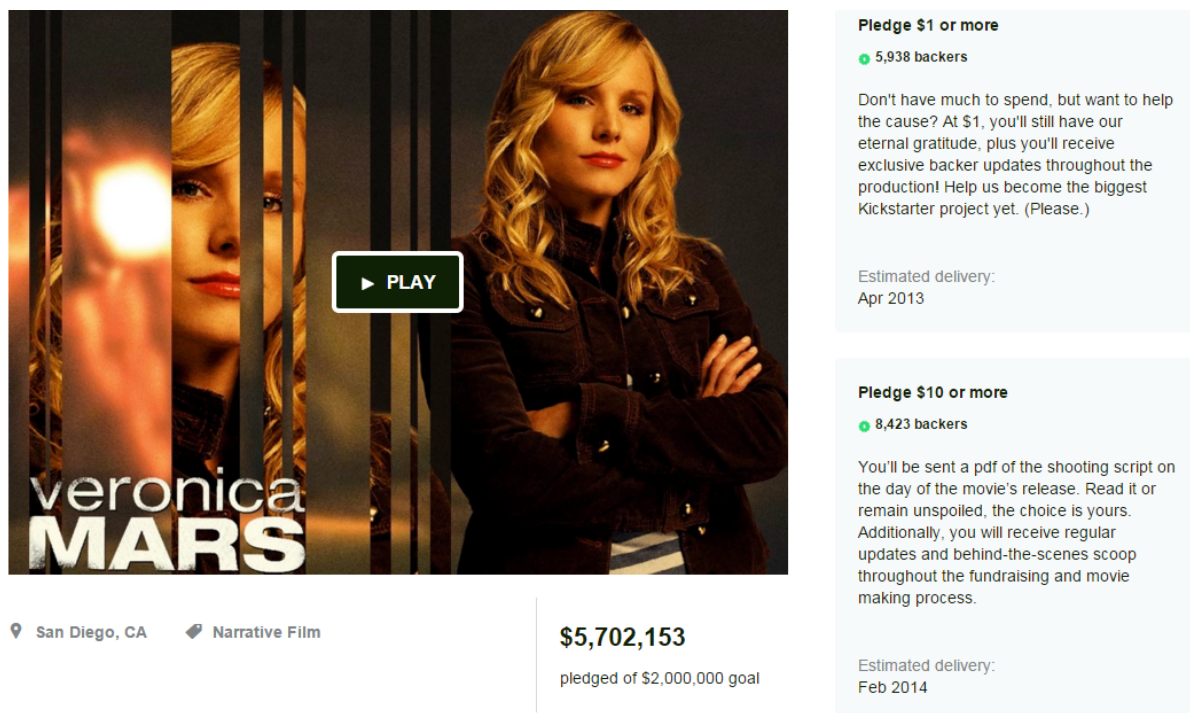


Figure 7: *The Veronica Mars* movie (Thomas 2014) screenplay offered as a reward to backers on their Kickstarter page

Actor and filmmaker Zach Braff similarly raised \$3.1 million in 2013 to develop the feature film *Wish I Was Here* (2014), as did Spike Lee and others (Dredge 2014). Such high-profile projects have helped establish these crowdfunding platforms as a legitimate means of film development.

Independent filmmaker Oisín Mac Coille argues that the successful development of a film often comes from a proven network of contacts, as well as a proven resume and he reminds us that these same traits are vital to success in the crowdfunding sphere. “If Zach Braff wasn’t who he was, would he have got three million in three days? ... He’s done so much that people are just going to say that’s a banker” (see Appendix C). A common misconception of crowdfunding is that anyone in the world can potentially support a project. The reality is that for most practitioners, the extent of one’s reach is directly linked to their profile in their film community. Mac Coille draws on an example of a film under production in Cork, Ireland at the time of the interview. To protect the identity of the filmmaker, their name has been changed.

I think crowd funding can be dangerous in the circle we currently live in. Because it ends up being friends giving friends. I give someone twenty-five euros, and they give it back to me. If you look at Tom’s film in Cork at the moment, most of his funders are people involved in the production. So, they are essentially paying themselves to work (Mac Coille, see Appendix C).

While crowdfunding might provide filmmakers with an independent avenue of funding that was not available to these practitioners a decade before, it comes with its own challenges and obstacles and can prove equally unpredictable and unreliable as the funding models employed by the productions of *Dead Man's Burden* and *Lore*.

What makes the Kickstarter campaign page fascinating from a screenwriting perspective, is the lack of a screenplay in support of it. An analysis of these pages shows that the only reference to the screenplay in both cases is as a reward for backers who support the project. This is a considerable departure from the traditional funding routes, where a screenplay is a key document in the deciding of what gets funded and what doesn't. In fact, in conventional funding models, the script is often the *only* document considered when getting passed the initial gatekeepers of the industry.

It can appear that traditional scripting documentation doesn't play a role in crowdfunding. However, I would argue that a revision is needed for how we consider what constitutes as 'production documentation' altogether. In fact, the crowdfunding campaign employs visual materials, including YouTube videos (primarily used as pitch trailers), conceptual artwork, character biographies and casting materials, as well as a toolkit that accommodates the web page as a platform for communicating what is essentially a strictly visual and audible concept. These visual materials are a form of adaptation, in that they take the text-based script, and adapt it for the web 2.0 consumer base. They form a strictly digital production document. This method of communicating the screen idea is an appropriate example of how the craft of screenwriting has caught up with the innovations of film production practices of the 21st century.

Case Study: Still Life

In this section, I will demonstrate the development of a crowdfunding campaign page, from a screenwriting perspective. The crowdfunding page was for a live action short film *Still Life* (Mac Coille 2014), based on a screenplay that I wrote. *Still Life* follows a young woman, Olivia, who works tirelessly to care for her father who is suffering from dementia. The film was drafted in 2013 as a speculative screenplay, and in 2014 it was acquired and put into production by a Galway based production team. Due to limitations associated with a government funding model, a crowdfunding method of development was chosen instead, as it offered a degree of freedom in approaching the production. As a producer on the film, I was also heavily involved in the development of the campaign page which was made on Indiegogo

(which, unlike Kickstarter, allows the artist to retain a percentage of any funding they earn, whether or not they have achieved their goals.).

As the screenwriter of the film, I saw the Indiegogo campaign as an opportunity to pitch the story of the film to a wide audience, by employing various multimedia that appeal to the consumption habits of media consumers today. The campaign page then resembled a variety of screenwriting documentation, in that it contained a synopsis, excerpts from the script, cast and crew biographies, as well as character breakdowns, and a visual pitch trailer that attempted to break down the story and the rationale behind the production. These materials were necessary to communicate the screen idea to the public, but in a way that responded to shifts in media consumption habits. We chose to crowdfund the production for several reasons, most notably because of the freedom it offers filmmakers, not bound by the agendas of investors. Our film would not be treated as a commodity or held to any standards outside our vision. Another reason we chose this was due to the limited and arguably restrictive modes of financing that are available to filmmakers in filmmaking institutions.

In Ireland, the main source of film funding comes from the Irish Film Board, a government-funded agency for supporting the film arts. However, the Irish Film Board functions like any other film finance organisation, in that it too has an agenda, and seeks to oversee the project so that it falls in line with its standards of practice. This is not a negative issue, and it is acknowledged to be part of any venture where significant financial investment is involved. But in the case of crowdfunding, the filmmaker has a level of freedom to operate that they do not get under other more conventional financing arrangements.

An appropriate YouTube video at the beginning of the page is a cornerstone of any crowdfunding campaign, and in this campaign the visual pitch trailer was seen as a first impression and a test of our ability to operate at a professional level. As the video is the first section of the page, it was important that it convey all the key points of information that we needed, indeed a summary of the overall project. As the screenwriter, I took it upon myself to write the short script for the video, from the perspective of the film's lead actor, Ruth Hayes. I then edited the narration, recorded by Hayes, into a series of still imagery and video to create a compelling introduction to the project and to highlight the importance of the story we were trying to tell. Some of the imagery was created or edited in Adobe Photoshop, while some were drawn from personal family albums. I drew from footage from previous projects, as well as work from other members of our crew.



Figure 8. Screen captures of the *Still Life* promotional video on Indiegogo

The video also gave us a chance to create a compelling logo and title sequence. The result was a piece of visual art that used nostalgia and audience identification as a narrative device to draw the viewer in to read more about the film.

The most notable trait of this campaign was the minimal presence of the screenplay. The issue of screenplay literacy played a factor in my choice not to include the full script in the campaign, as many potential backers might not understand how to read a script or understand the visual language employed. They might not understand the conventions of screenwriting, such as INT. or EXT, or any of the other medium-specific codes of screenplay jargon. Rather than including the entire twelve-page screenplay on the campaign, an excerpt was posted on my blog, *Please Return to the Script Dept.* (Finnegan 2014) and hyperlinked to the campaign.

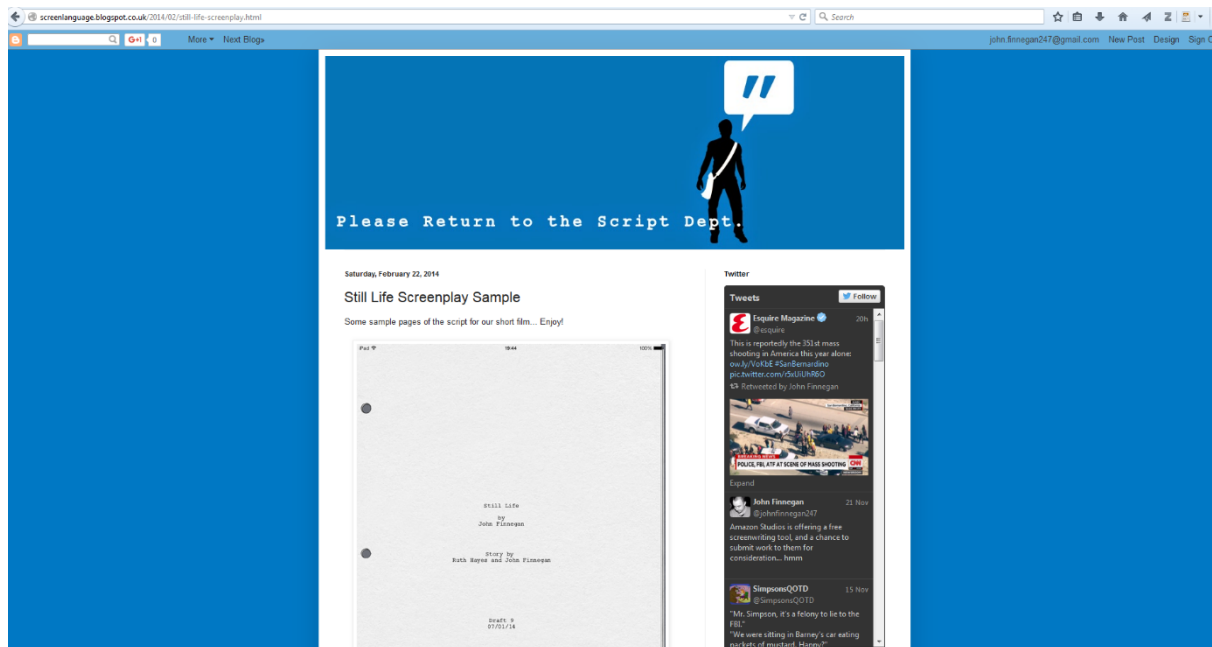


Figure 9. Script excerpts on my blog

I intentionally chose to host the extracts from the screenplay on my blog, rather than on the campaign page so that I could monitor traffic to the script posts and gauge the significance of the traditional script in influencing backers to support the project. This was achieved using Google Blogger's analytical tools that are included with the blog service.

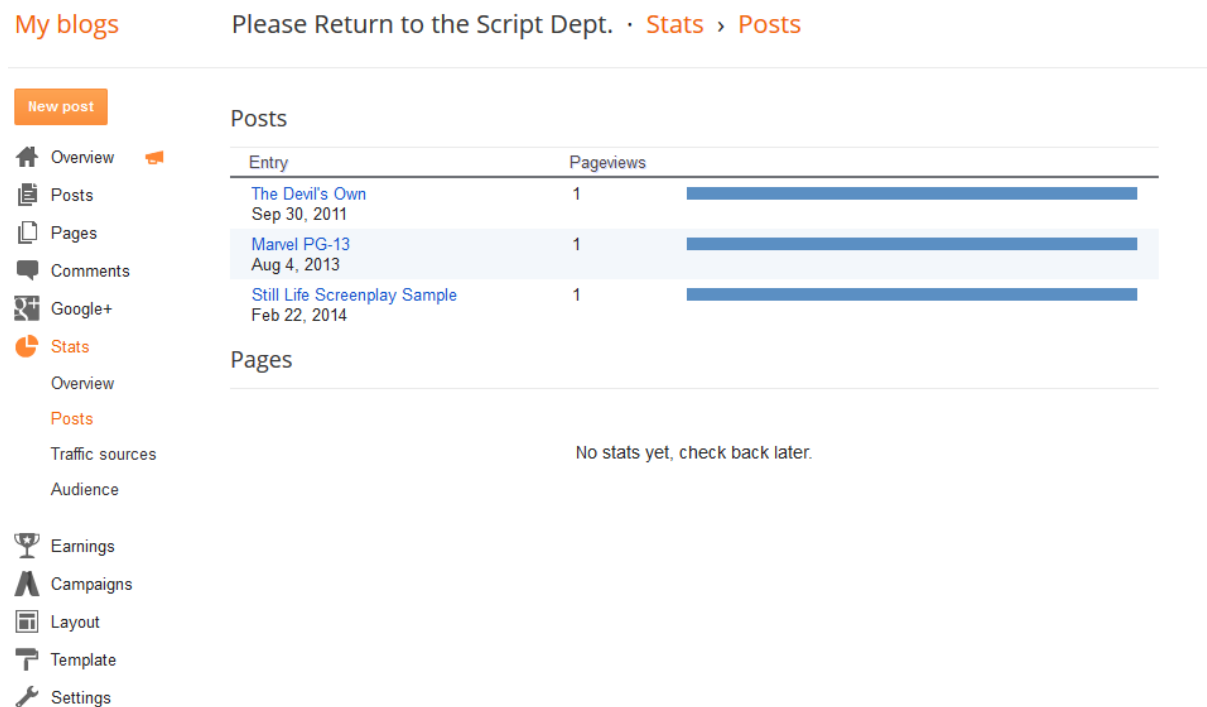


Figure 10. Page views for screenplay excerpts

The results showed that only one person viewed the screenplay excerpts, thus reaffirming my initial hypothesis that the script would have little impact on the overall success or failure of our campaign. This is significant, as it provides an insight into the reason why so many film campaigns on crowdfunding platforms lack a screenplay on their pages. It suggests that the screenplay is not a necessary document in securing funding for a project using this method and is contrary to the primacy that is typically placed on the traditional screenplay text in the development stages of a production.

The final sections of the campaign offered short biographies of the cast and crew of the film to demonstrate our experience to date and the level of professionalism and commitment to quality that we were bringing to the production. Finally, we included a brief explanation of how Indiegogo works (to help those who were unfamiliar with the process of crowdfunding) and gave links to our social media pages on Twitter and Facebook so that our backers could continue to engage with us throughout the production.

The overall campaign was a success, despite having raised only a fraction of our desired budget. Despite the lack of a full screenplay in the campaign, the screen idea itself was communicated quite well, using trailers, posters, social media and articles of interest. The public reaction to the film was strong and we received praise for our campaign and for the film we were trying to make. The biggest conclusion I drew from the experience was that our Indiegogo page could have been crafted and launched without a screenplay having been written. As the statistics of the blog show (figure 10), our funding arrived off the strength of how well our screen idea was communicated and not the screenplay that I wrote a year before. This suggests that our campaign doubled as a vital production document in the production of our film, but one that catered to the digital consumption habits of our financiers – our intended audience. It also demonstrates in what ways this avenue of film production can offer new approaches to the practice of writing for the screen, and offer new agency to the screenwriter and their role in the overall production.

Conclusion

Film production models have evolved to the point where, in the independent sector, the models resemble the cameraman and director systems of the early 20th century. While this revolution is still contained largely in the independent sector of filmmaking, it has allowed for the script to find a new life outside of the confines of the commercial industry.

The first section of this chapter sought to establish a precedent in the past, where writers of the screen brought a background in other media of the time, journalism, theatre, photography

and music, to their film work. I explored the evolution of screenwriting, from the early days of the scenario in cinema, and established a relationship between the technology of the cinema of the time and the form of the screenplay. The research showed that changing media technology could influence the screenplay in both writing style and structure.

In the second half of the chapter, I drew on contemporary examples of screenplays that attempted to break convention and employ experimental techniques involving modern multimedia technology, to give new purpose to the screenplay in film production. The examples I used draw on both Hollywood and independent productions and demonstrate the concept of the visual screenplay and how it can serve the production of a film in ways that a conventional screenplay cannot. The example of the Kickstarter campaign is a perfect case study of how digital media technology is affording the writer new opportunities and methods by which they can communicate the screen idea to their implied reader. In the case of these modes of production, the trends surrounding this technology has demanded that the role of the writer shift from wordsmith to visual artist, but the author of the screen idea nonetheless. These techniques, including image manipulation, video editing, and web design, are not skills that remain in the domain of industry experts, rather now they are available for all, with minimal learning curves. Munt, in his exploration of the visual script states:

[...] if, traditionally, words have been considered as *expensive* (literary adaptation as an industrial, commercial pursuit), then in an accelerated digital media culture (where images have never before been as *cheap* to produce, manipulate and distribute) a transformation is due (2012, 60).

The ease with which these tools can, and are quickly being adopted, means that the Kickstarter has in a sense become an accessible production document for the practitioner, like the treatment or step outline, but a document that many screenwriters have yet to embrace. It mirrors the early scenarios, not just a scripting tool, but a marketing one also. Sadly, the screenwriter plays little role in the shaping of this pivotal document.

In the academy, theorists and practitioners are arguing in favour of a revisionist approach to the role of the screenwriter, and the orthodoxy that has shaped it for so long. Millard demonstrates how changing technologies are now affording filmmakers the opportunity to craft their screenplay form. She uses the example of Neil Blomkamp, who when preparing *District 9* (2009) used a short film, a graphic novel-style presentation, production design materials and test footage filmed on location. This gave Blomkamp a significant boost in attracting investment (Millard 2014, 39). This and the examples outlined in the chapter

demonstrate that, as the convergence between technology and the page continues to manifest in film production, new and exciting approaches to the craft are revealed. The notion of a multimodal screenplay, one not bound by old traditions and industrial pressures of conformity, has greater implications for the role of the screenwriter in digital cultural studies. Shifts in the consumption of digital media, as well as the widespread adoption of social media platforms, has given rise to an array of tools that allow the writer to engage with their implied reader directly. The adoption of a wider toolkit by screenwriters to develop the screen idea is not just an expanding of the screenwriter's page, in fact, it is a revision of how we consider the page entirely.

Chapter 2: Contemporary ‘Industry Facing Screenwriting’ Practices

It’s the commercial film that is on the margin of the art of cinema and that needs a proper and clear term to describe it; avant-garde filmmakers do not need any terms to describe their work – their work is, simply, Cinema (Mekas, paraphrasing Keibelka, cited in Holmlund and Wyatt 2004, 36).

Introduction

The Writers Guild of Great Britain writes in its manifesto that it seeks “to enhance the rights and status of writers in the development and production process” (WGGB, cited in Conor 2014, 128). The role of the writer on set is commonly viewed as a marginalised one. As Conor highlights at the beginning of her book, the struggling writer is a familiar trope of cinema, famously depicted as an expendable studio asset found face down in a pool at the beginning of *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder 1950), or working at a typewriter in *Adaptation* (Jonze 2002) (2014, 14). The writer is more than an administrative assistant to a producer, or a studio executive, and they provide far more than a ninety-page screenplay to a production. Their knowledge of the screen idea, the story-verse and the characters that reside in it make them valuable assets to the production. They can function as an advisor to the production, long after pre-production has finished, or can liaise with performers and other artists to assist in the realisation of that idea.

In the previous chapter, I investigated the role that technological advancements have on the craft of writing for the screen. As an example, recent shifts in the digital culture have given rise to crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo, and these platforms have provided filmmakers with an alternative to the funding avenues already in existence. These platforms, in turn, demand alternative methods of communicating the screen idea. These shifts have further boosted the role of writers and how they engage with the implied reader of film productions, and changed the way the writer perceives the implied reader altogether.

In this chapter, I will explore this innovative and democratic approach to filmmaking and investigate how the screenwriter is situated in this aspect of film funding so as to further investigate the unseen contributions of screenwriters in film productions. This chapter will not only explore the impact that these digital platforms are having on the “remediation” of the screenplay (Gay 2014, 271), but will further reinforce the early relationship between technology and the craft of screenwriting, which was established in chapter one, has persisted in cinema to date.

In the introduction of this thesis, I established that studies of implied readership, which are common in literary studies, can also be beneficial to the screenwriting scholar. The implied reader, a general term for any potential consumer of the screenplay text, influences the screenwriter and their process. However, when writing ‘industry facing’ screenplays, the implied reader becomes a very real and graspable person with which the screenwriter can engage. They will most likely be the producer of the film, the lead actors, a director and many other heads of departments. The screenwriter will interact and collaborate with these practitioners on a daily basis, receive feedback and script notes, perform rewrites based on these notes and find their work challenged by a host of practical and logistical issues such as budgeting and scheduling factors, marketing plans and creative differences that might arise among different artists on set.

I also established that some depictions of the screenwriter in scholarship fail to acknowledge aspects of the craft that are not commonly discussed in popular screenwriting literature, for example, the how-to guides and manuals. This is particularly the case in independent sectors of cinema, where conventions are frequently broken, and experimental practices are encouraged. As is argued in the introductory chapter, the ways in which we consider independent cinema in general in scholarship is problematic.

Professor Jon Lewis suggests that to better understand independent cinema, we must first look to the dominant institution, “Hollywood cinema” (1998, 308). The term ‘independence’ implies a relationship to the “dominant system” and, according to Lewis should be treated as a “relational term”, rather than a “free standing and autonomous” practice (Lewis 1998, 308). The degree with which a filmmaker can claim independence is relative. Many high-profile productions are heralded as independent films, yet it is usually possible to trace their dependency to the Hollywood model in some respect.

Among scholars like Michael Newman and Andrew Gay, this relationship to the dominant institutions is what seems to drive many discourses surrounding independent cinema. These discourses are dependent on one particular set of standards, namely that of the Fordist Hollywood production model. The Hollywood method of screenwriting is one designed to fit the details of that sector of filmmaking, something that Andrew Gay argues is not applicable to those operating in the independent sector.

Independent film-makers who lack the resources for simultaneous project development, conventional market research and substantial reshoots in post-production cannot replicate this process. It is simply too difficult to scale the system down for non-industrial films made on smaller budgets (Gay 2014, 262).

From a practical perspective, it is unrealistic to expect Hollywood standards of storytelling, production, distribution and marketing to apply to any branch of independent cinema, much like the practices of a multi-national corporation cannot apply to a start-up business.

Screenwriting theorist Andrew Gay mirrors this belief in his attempt to revise independent screenwriting practice, alluding to the Fordist manufacturing models employed by Hollywood and their incompatibility with micro-budget filmmaking (2014, 261). To draw parallels between the Hollywood institution model, and the varied and differing production models exhibited in the independent sector, can lead to inaccurate assumptions as to the roles and responsibilities of the practitioners that operate in it. Screenwriting, in relation to film production, is a collaborative and creative craft required to adapt to ever changing forces in the film industry, and the obstacles of individual productions.

This chapter deconstructs the screenwriting process, as well as the role of the writer in a film's production cycle, to reveal the work of writers practising in an 'industry facing' mode of story development. To achieve this aim, a series of films, two independent productions and one Hollywood production, will be used to depict the screenwriter in a production setting. These industrial case studies are in the form of interviews conducted with professional filmmakers at different steps of the industry ladder. They will reveal actual fundraising, development, filming and production techniques, as well as the distribution and marketing stages of the production cycle, to present a fully formed impression of a screenwriter's role in the production.

The films I have selected for my case study are *Lore* (Shortland 2012), *Dead Man's Burden* (Moshe 2013), and *The Mummy* (Kurtzman 2017). These films were chosen not only because of the various production processes they employed in their creation, but also because of their differing budgets, ranging from two thousand euros to over two hundred million dollars. These case studies show the different practices of screenwriters throughout these differing models of production.

The first case study, *Lore*, is the story of a young German woman who brings her younger siblings on a journey across Germany to their grandmother's home at the end of the Second World War. Filmed on a budget of four million pounds, it was a joint production between European and Australian filmmakers. It represents a typical model where screenwriter, director, and producer all have clearly defined roles. The second case study, *Dead Man's Burden*, is an American Western filmed on a budget of \$200,000. It was chosen because, in this instance, director Jared Moshe also acted as the film's screenwriter and producer.

Therefore, it represents a common facet of independent productions, where the adoption of multiple key roles on a production is sometimes necessary and considered standard practice. The story follows a young man who reunites with his estranged sister upon hearing the news of his father's death. The final case study in this chapter is about a Hollywood production, *The Mummy* (Kurtzman 2017), and focuses on the experiences of screenwriter Dylan Kussman working on set in such a high profile and large-scale production. This is an important interview as it provides insight into the breakdown of labour on a Hollywood production with emphasis on the craft of screenwriting. The inclusion of this case study also ensures a more complete representation of the contributions of a screenwriter to a film's pre-production, production, and post-production stages.

This chapter will seek to compare and contrast traditional models of film production, as well as the role of the screenwriter therein. It focuses on a contemporary approach to the craft and argues that the one size fits all model of the screenwriter, as exhibited in screenwriting craft manuals, blogs and websites, is inaccurate when discussing the writer in an independent production and that, in fact, the screenwriter exhibits a far greater degree of responsibility in the realisation of the screen idea in the film's production cycle.

In the following section, I will explore the early development of two of these case studies, *Lore* and *Dead Man's Burden*, by focusing on their earliest incarnation as a screen idea, their traversing of the fundraising landscape, and the unseen contributions of the screenwriters during this time. Then I will use the case study of *The Mummy* to contrast the stages of labour in these films against that of a larger production.

Developing an Independent Screen Idea

For many filmmakers, the government funding body is the first port of call in seeking production support for their film. During this stage, the screenplay can be seen as a complimentary document to the wide array of other production documentation employed in a film's early planning, such as budgeting and scheduling plans. Andrew Gay reminds us that conventional scripting practices emerged as the result of studio executives seeking efficient development methods, as well as a means of exerting strict managerial control across the entire production process (citing Bordwell et al. 2014, 262). Arguably, the screenplay's form has always been linked to the practices of film production. In independent modes of film production, writers can commonly find themselves adopting such a managerial role in the financing stages. After all, the financier is arguably the hardest gatekeeper to pass in film

production. Their approval can signal a rapid development and help yield a successful end product. However, such a smooth growth period is uncommon. The reality is that film financing can be the longest and most unpredictable stage of the entire production process. This can lead filmmakers to compromise their artistic vision, as well as their artistic independence. At the most basic stages of a project, the adaptation of the script to screen can be held up by production logistics such as financing. Therefore, the screenwriter is intrinsically involved in the funding stages, whether they are actively participating or not. The creation of early documentation, such as pitching documents, writer's statements and more can place the writer in a central position in the production of an independent film.

Many independent films in the UK and Ireland pursue their funding goals via bodies such as the Irish Film Board, the British Film Institute or, in the case of *Lore*, Scottish Screen (now Creative Scotland). These funding bodies tend to lean towards team-based projects where a writer is expected to contribute a wide variety of screenplay documentation, including treatments, outlines and statements, as part of the application process. As an example of such a process, *Lore* screenwriter Robin Mukherjee explains his initial meetings with Scottish Screen, in their nearly seven-year quest to fund the production and the contributions he made to the fundraising efforts as a screenwriter (see Appendix B). At this time Mukherjee was mainly collaborating with producer Paul Welsh and was required to prepare what he calls, a "writer's response" to reading Rachel Seiffert's source novel, *The Dark Room* (2002).

I did a very personal statement, saying that I didn't really want to adapt anything as I had enough to do, but I was gripped by the book, and I felt that I could relate and it resonated with me. So, Scottish Screen was very happy with that, and I believe after that they asked for a pitch, a proposal document – so that's where the work started ... and it was about a year before they finally said here is some development money (Mukherjee, see Appendix B).

In the UK and Ireland, there is a wide selection of branches and bodies available, such as the British Film Institute, Film 4, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Screen Yorkshire, and in Ireland, the Irish Film Board. These organisations operate in specific and timed windows of development, meaning that applicants are limited in their opportunities to approach these bodies. Conversely, one of the key strengths of these organisations is their openness to new talents. In traditional production organisations, there are clear rules in place forbidding those who are not represented by a talent agent to submit unsolicited material to the company. In a funding body such as the Irish Film Board, for example, a filmmaker of any background or level of experience is welcome to apply. However, micro-budget filmmaker Oisín Mac Coille highlights that an

amateur filmmaker, no matter how good the submission, is unlikely to progress beyond the application stages if they do not have a production credit relating to that same funding award (see Appendix C). Mac Coille is also critical of this method of selection, given that, in his eyes, there is an equally large talent pool working outside of that production model, which largely goes unrecognised (see Appendix C). Mac Coille describes the process as “a corporation giving money. You need a duty of care to the taxpayer to ensure that the money is being given to the best possible productions” (Mac Coille, see Appendix C). In this regard, these government funding bodies are very similar to the mainstream production companies.

They’ll sit down and talk to you if it’s good enough. But if you send in your script in a brown envelope to a production company, more often than not, it will go in the bin. Neither of them is going to take a chance on someone fresh out of college with no experience to their name (Mac Coille, see Appendix C).



Figure 1. Irish Film Board website homepage.

Mac Coille’s argument, that the IFB gives preference to experienced and veteran filmmakers, is further supported by their various press releases and marketing materials. *Figure 1* shows an example of this; a collection of IFB supported practitioners promoting the 2016 slate of IFB supported films, including Academy Award nominated feature filmmakers, Lenny Abrahamson and Jim Sheridan.

In support of Irish screenwriters, the IFB offered the Screenplay Development Loan enabling writers “to develop a first draft and revised draft of a screenplay for a live-action fiction or animated feature film” (Irish Film Board 2016). This loan (which has since been removed from the IFB website) offered writers up to €12,000 to develop a live-action film and up to fifty thousand for what they refer to as “high-end TV dramas” (Irish Film Board 2016). Funding came in the form of a loan which was repayable on the first day of principle photography. This means that if the writer is unsuccessful in producing their film, the loan is cancelled. This raises questions as to how the organisation views the production process, specifically whether or not it is open to unorthodox methods of film production where the writing of the screenplay can potentially happen alongside the filming of key scenes.

Producer Karsten Killerich expresses frustration at the funding bodies or investors who expect a conventional screenplay akin to a live action production, when seeking funding for an animated project (cited in Wells 2011, 90). Alternative models of scripting and story development is common in animation production or in cases where experimentation and alternative styles are required, but it is not reflected in these support frameworks. A further drawback to the use of these types of funding bodies is that they often have an agenda of their own. The Irish Film Board, for example, seeks to support projects that benefit the Irish economy (irishfilmboard.ie).

Still, if successful in attaining early funding from such organisations, the screenwriters can operate with a degree of security and commit themselves to the development of the screenplay, while the producer seeks long-term investment. This was the case for Mukherjee who, having received script funding, was able to write several drafts of the script while producer Paul Welsh began looking for a suitable director. Cate Shortland, a successful Australian filmmaker, joined the production and, as Mukherjee recalls, this new collaboration affected his approach to the writing of the film in a positive and creative way.

One thing you know is that she’s (Shortland) very much in the moment, she’ll find things, she loves that spontaneity. When you’re out there on the road, you don’t know what the performances are going to be. So, essentially the emphasis shifts to providing a foundation – you’re not going to write every snail, every shard of light (Mukherjee, see Appendix B).

Mukherjee explains the influence that director Cate Shortland had on his writing of the script, and gives insight into how the production itself impacted his process as a writer. Specifically, he describes how the detail in the script was kept to a minimum, “providing a foundation” for

the film to come, as opposed to strictly scripting every beat of action, a common practice in speculative screenwriting practices. This finding highlights how varied the scripting of different films can be, particularly in an ‘industry facing’ setting. Independent film director and producer Jared Moshe offers his perspective on the contrast between both styles of writing:

The big difference between writing a spec and writing something that you’re going to direct is when writing a spec, you have to write something that’s basically perfect, that you can sell. And your main purpose is to sell it and get it on its way. When you’re writing something that you’re going to make, you’re trying to figure out how you’re going to convey it and the project isn’t just the script (Moshe, see Appendix A).

Moshe argues that there is a “freedom” in writing for one’s self, as the demand for a perfect script is no longer present in the writer’s mind (see Appendix A). He uses a typical action scene as a way of describing the different methods of writing. In a speculative screenplay, Moshe says, the writer will normally invest considerable amounts of time and energy into scripting a highly detailed and organised action sequence for the reader to imagine it playing on the screen. Nevertheless, in an ‘industry facing’ screenplay, Moshe says that, normally, the writer will only write the “beats” of the action scene (see Appendix A). For Moshe, the importance of the scene is found in those beats. The writer must find those “turning points” so that they can capture and communicate the essence of the scene “and then, that scene will be changed like six times over the course of things. That’s the entire script in a little bit” (Moshe, see Appendix A). Moshe’s use of the action sequence to describe the act of ‘industry facing screenwriting’ is an interesting way of understanding how a screenplay is conceived and communicated at this stage, and it provides insight into the degree of detail and specification that is necessary.

One issue with development loans is that, unlike Moshe’s account, lots of effort and time is expected to be put into a project, despite the fact that the bulk of the financing is not yet secure. Despite the large budgets of government funding bodies, it is uncommon for them to provide complete financial support for feature films. In many instances, funding can come from a wide array of sources. According to the Irish Film Board’s press release for Ken Loach’s €6.5 million film *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (2006), financing came from the (now defunct) UK Film Council, The Irish Film Board, Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen, and TV3, as well as distribution support by Pathé (Irish Film Board 2005). Such a large number of financiers can complicate the production of the film, as Mukherjee experienced on *Lore*, when the banking collapse resulted in financiers pulling out from the project, resulting in further delays (Mukherjee, see Appendix B). The production was instead supported by financing from

Australian sources, which director Cate Shortland was able to organise. She was also able to source a director of photography and a music composer. Production support was completed by Memento and Music Box, which allowed the production to progress into pre-production (Mukherjee, see Appendix B).

Jared Moshe's U.S. based production, *Dead Man's Burden*, was made using investors' support. Something of significant interest to this research is the hybrid role which Jared adopted in his development of this project. In this instance, he juggled the role of screenwriter, producer and director. This trio of roles impacted one another. In particular, the screenplay and screenwriting process had a bearing on the schedule and budget of the film; in turn, these logistical aspects also affected the writing. The implied reader of his screenplay, as well as the implied spectator of his intended film, evidently affected his creative decision making. Moshe already knew the story he wanted to tell, but he also acknowledged the difficulty of selling a film of the Western genre to an American marketplace. As Moshe explains, "in American financing you always have to think about what the market will stand, and with Westerns, the market stands like nothing" (see Appendix A). Moshe limited himself from the very beginning of the writing process. He gave himself a set number of characters, extras, locations and other aspects of the production that would impact the budget of the film. The resulting script was, according to Moshe, "scalable based on whoever we cast in it" (see Appendix A). By "scalable", Moshe refers to the script's ability to be expanded or reduced depending on what resources were available. One key factor in the production cycle of *Dead Man's Burden* is that Jared Moshe had adamantly decided he was going to shoot in the fall of that year whether or not the ideal production scenarios were met. With a fixed production date in place, Moshe was determined to make the film by any means, stating, "I'm going to try and get the cast I want, but I am not going to stand around and wait for the never-ending Hollywood world and waiting and developing" (Moshe, see Appendix A).

To raise money for his film, Jared instead had to rely on independent investors, former production partners and securing deals with post-production companies. One such producer had invested in Moshe's previous projects and because said producer had made a return on his investment, he was comfortable re-investing in this production as well. Part of the agreement for this initial investment was that the budget not exceed two hundred thousand dollars. Moshe describes this process as "moving on multiple fronts at the same time" (see Appendix A). This is in reference to his multiple approaches to fundraising, which eventually involved securing another significant portion of the budget from an independent investor and the remainder of

the budget from Moshe's successful negotiations with post-production houses to offer deals on the use of their facilities.

For Moshe, the screenwriting process didn't stop when he began securing funding. In fact, the pre-production stage allowed him to start adapting his story, his characters, and the overall screenplay to the progress, or sometimes lack thereof, of the production.

So basically, I had all these different things going on and as I would find an element, I would start revising the script based on that element. So, for example, we attached our two lead actors and then I did a pass writing to their strengths ... Then, the same thing, we got a post deal that ensured I could shoot on film, so now I budgeted to shoot on film (Moshe, see Appendix A).

This mode of financing is common for filmmakers who must think as creatively in their fundraising as they do in their filmmaking. "Money is cobbled together from the filmmaker, family and friends, speculative investors, and in some cases institutions" (Kleinham, cited in Lewis 1998, 317). The value of star-power, and proven industry names, can become an attraction for filmmakers in helping to raise the profile of the production and eliminate such unreliable methods of funding. However, this is not a straightforward process. Even if a high-profile name is attracted to the project, it can have other implications on the overall production. Moshe dealt with this dilemma on *Dead Man's Burden* when he was encouraged by producers to seek out commercially bankable stars. At one point, as Moshe explains, they had a name who was interested in the lead role, but this would have meant putting the production on hold while waiting for them to become available (see Appendix A). Having a famous name involved could have attracted greater funding, but Moshe made a choice not to put the film on hold in the hope of attracting a larger budget and instead make the film sooner and in the way that he had initially planned (see Appendix A).

The Contribution of the Screenwriter in a Film Production

A significant finding of this research into contemporary film production practices is how the screenwriting process is linked to the financial and other production logistics of filmmaking practice. As Jared Moshe explained, the logistical issues of producing and directing a film played a significant role in how he wrote the script. He gave consideration to casting, how many extras he could afford, what locations he could build, whether they be celluloid or digital and even what camera technologies he could employ. *Lore* screenwriter, Robin Mukherjee,

echoed this in his discussion of how *Lore* was produced. He referred to the pitching process where he engaged with investors such as Scottish Screen.

Another revelation of these interviews was that the division of labour on such productions is not as black and white as typical Hollywood models might suggest. Moshe played the role of writer, producer and director and, as he explained, his role frequently fluctuated throughout the production. Even though *Lore* represents a more conventional production, it was evident from Mukherjee's insights that even his role experienced a dynamic shift when director Cate Shortland came on board. The shift can be a sign of progression for the film. Mukherjee describes the "transition" he experienced from developing ideas with producer Paul Welsh to collaborating with director Cate Shortland. Even when Shortland produced her own director's draft of the script, Mukherjee still played an advisory role in conjunction with other key creative people (including Rachel Seiffert, the author of the source text) on the production. As an example, Mukherjee discusses how he and Seiffert viewed one character in particular as being quite differently from how other members of the production saw him.

"For example, neither Rachel nor I had seen the father as being so brutal and animalistic and Cate said that the actor came along with that. When they thought about it, it was the only choice ... Lots of creative movements. The last thing you want is a director just to direct the script, it's an organic thing and everyone has a hand in it (Mukherjee, see Appendix B).

The above quote gives the reader insight into how Mukherjee welcomes collaboration with other practitioners, such as the director and actors. The notion that the screenwriter simply hands a script over to a director and he or she adapts it as it is, seems to be problematic for him. This is an important point because it sheds light on an underlying reality of screenwriting, in that the script is always in flux, changing with the production. Typically, the screenwriter is seen to be marginalised at the earliest stages of pre-production, even as the screenplay text follows the film throughout the other production stages. Mukherjee's point is a pivotal aspect, because the departmentalisation of film production, which has typically been found in Hollywood and unionised productions, is not applicable to all productions in the independent sector.

Finally, from a screenwriting perspective, it is evident that the role of the writer is enhanced in such productions. Robin Mukherjee demonstrated this in his collaborations with producer Paul Welsh and director Cate Shortland. In brief, these case studies present a far more

progressive method of filmmaking, one that places the writer as a central figure in the production process.

Comparisons to the Hollywood Mode of Screenwriting

The final case study that will be presented here is the work of screenwriter and actor Dylan Kussman, and his experiences of writing the Hollywood blockbuster *The Mummy* (Kurtzman 2017). Kussman's background lies in the field of acting, where he established a successful career appearing in films such as *Dead Poet's Society* (Weir 1989) and *Jack Reacher* (McQuarrie 2012). Recently, Kussman has established himself as a screenwriter and filmmaker, having just completed his first feature length film *Wrestling Jerusalem* (Kussman 2016). For this thesis, it was his work as a screenwriter on *The Mummy* that is of interest.

The Mummy is an action/adventure Hollywood 'blockbuster' that boasts stars such as Tom Cruise and Russell Crowe. It was written in a typical Hollywood fashion, where, as Kussman explains, the screenplay went through several drafts with many writers before he came to the project. Some of the writers involved in this included Jon Spaihts, writer of *Prometheus* (Scott 2012) and Marvel's *Doctor Strange* (Derrickson 2016), as well as Christopher McQuarrie, writer of *The Usual Suspects* (Singer 1995), *Valkyrie* (Singer 2008) and *Jack Reacher*. Due to scheduling conflicts, McQuarrie stepped back (although only partially) to allow Kussman to take over the duties of the writer in the weeks leading up to and including principle photography. It is this aspect of Kussman's experience that I am interested in exploring here as it differs greatly from Mukherjee and Moshe's accounts of writing on a project from the very beginning of its conception. Such a case study is also necessary so as to reflect this common aspect of screenwriting in Hollywood, which is otherwise widely unrecognised in screenwriting research. Finally, this case study compliments the other interviews already conducted. The interview with Kussman provides insight into the craft of screenwriting at the highest levels of Hollywood and this ensures that a complete portrayal of the screenwriter's duties are explored, with the goal of providing a better understanding of their contributions across all levels of the filmmaking spectrum.

Kussman's account of working on *The Mummy* is interesting in that, by his admission, he believed he was going to be rewriting the script from the very beginning, based on previous notes and with input from Cruise and McQuarrie. But, the reality was very different. As McQuarrie was unable to be on set during principal photography, Kussman became the primary screenwriter on the set. Before this, Kussman describes being brought into what was affectionately known as the "war room" on his first day (Kussman, see Appendix D). The 'war

room' was, in fact, a conference room that had been used to display an array of conceptual matte paintings which were instrumental in planning the production. These matte paintings depicted each set and location and were arranged in their appropriate running order to give Kussman and other production personnel a sense of the film to come. The use of previsualisation tools, such as matte paintings or screen tests, is common in such large-scale productions as this and it is interesting to see how instrumental they are here as a functional tool for the writers. With the structural aspects of the film, as well as much of the other key creative decisions already in place, Kussman's role was to "rebuild it as a screenplay that gave Tom (Cruise) the character work he wanted [...] and story transitions, the movement of scenes, finding humour where appropriate, the action beats that Chris (McQuarrie) and Tom specialise in" (Kussman, see Appendix D).

Kussman's role on the production is greatly different to that of other writers already explored in this thesis. Kussman's job wasn't to conceive or adapt the story into a screenplay form, but instead to adapt the screenplay which already existed to the ever changing production as it progressed into principle photography. Kussman's specific role is indicative of how fluid the screen idea is, as it is written and re-written according to the different implied readers of the script. In this instance, the most notable implied reader was the star of the film, Tom Cruise, who proved a significant influence on the further rewrites to come. Kussman explains:

When an actor of Tom Cruise's stature and power in the industry agrees to come on board a project, he then becomes a very significant voice in that project and so he said: "here's the direction I want to go in with the script" ... Tom likes a writer on set because he wants someone to respond to, improve, or make suggestions, such as "this scene is too long, let's cut it." "And we need these rewrites done now and we need them on the sides for the shooting that we're going to start doing in an hour. We need cue cards done for something, such as action sequences." There needs to be a writer at work on set, feeding into the process where necessary (Kussman, see Appendix D).

His own history as a professional stage and screen actor heightened Kussman's value on this production. Kussman was able to draw on these skills to inform his writing each day on the set. Kussman describes his working relationship with Cruise, actor-to-actor, and how this shared understanding of the craft of acting benefitted the rewrites. "I know what the actors are going to go for. It becomes a part of the writing. So many writers don't know the acting craft from anything, so there's a conflict between the writers and the actors" (Kussman. see Appendix D).

Kussman's daily routine on set would be spent, as he puts it, "working through whatever the work for the day was", before then moving onto the set. "At some point, Alex (Kurtzman) and Tom would call me to have a conversation about things that were going to change. I would then go away and work on it" (Kussman, see Appendix D). The producers were also vocal and would give regular feedback to Kussman and further reiterate the changes that Cruise and director Alex Kurtzman wanted. Screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie would also provide input. Kussman viewed McQuarrie as the "executive writer or sorts", and so Kussman would regularly keep him up-to-date about the direction the story was taking.

I would have to take Chris' feedback to Alex and Tom. They would either agree with his notes or they would say we want to do it this way. It was a diplomatic part in many ways that I was playing. I was in-between some huge creative forces, and making sure everyone was happy with what they were getting. It was very bizarre, but cool though (Kussman, see Appendix D).

The inclusion of a working writer on set and, in particular, a writer working so closely with an actor, can be seen as being unusual in a typical mainstream production. Kussman acknowledges that this is an issue in filmmaking and postulates that the reason many producers and directors reject the opportunity to have a writer on set is that "we're trouble. Writers are like, "why didn't you shoot it the way I wrote it?"'" (Kussman, see Appendix D). Kussman dismisses this overly protective view of writers on set, arguing instead that his goal is to help achieve the best scene. His description of this process can be likened to that of a director engaging with their cast and crew; observing the camera angles and offering suggestions that will enhance the experience. This ability to adapt to the creative contributions of the many other practitioners in a production (e.g. the actors, directors, producers, production designers and cinematographers) highlights how fluid and open to change Kussman was with the script. To help further explain this process, Kussman draws on the independent filmmaker John Cassavetes due to his philosophy on the fluid nature of filmmaking, and how the screenplay resides in it.

Cassavetes was all about beating himself up for years writing a screenplay and then when he walked onto the set, he'd throw it all out – because all of these things in his head don't match up. Throw it out and let's do it this way. I find that very inspiring. It's part of the organic process of screenwriting. You are constantly in rewrite mode. It's never done. It's never done until the day you release the film. And a lot of writers want to say, now that I've pressed the last period on the fourth rewrite it's done. It's not done. It's actually just started and your screenplay is going to get consumed by the fires of

production. And you want to watch it burn. You want to help it burn (Kussman, see Appendix D).

As Kussman states, the goal of the writer on a set is about getting the scene “from A to B” (see Appendix D). It is to facilitate the creative input of others, rather than dictating the nature of the production and to consider the suggestions of others in the hope of delivering the best version of a scene to the director and the cast (Kussman, see Appendix D). As Kussman has shown, the role often demands an appreciation and understanding of the craft of acting, but also directing, cinematography and all the many other subfields that comprise the craft of filmmaking. At the time of this interview, Kussman has also been invited to participate in the post-production of *The Mummy*, a stage of filmmaking where writers are rarely involved. Here he is receiving notes from the studio, as well as from McQuarrie, Cruise, director Alex Kurtzman and feedback from test screenings. This has resulted in reshoots of the production (something which is common in all modes of filmmaking) and, in turn, the need for further rewrites. In this respect, Kussman’s role is as a facilitator of the overall production and, in keeping with his Cassavetes-inspired philosophy, he stated, “if your script is getting in the way, chuck it” (Kussman, see Appendix D).

Conclusion

Screenwriters can play a variety of roles in the crucial early stage of a production, for example, they can be involved in pitching the project to funding body executives or potential actors. The visual pitch is one method of attracting funding and is a technique common in filmmaking when seeking to communicate the screen idea to the gatekeepers of film financing. Commonly, the pitch can be a mood reel or test footage. It could also be a series of images, conceptual artwork or a video clip communicating the story to the viewer. Robin Mukherjee believes that the audience is “essential to the process” of screenwriting (see Appendix B) and that the writer considers the audience in how they communicate the screen idea. During a production, it is sometimes possible for the writer to take on such a responsibility and to expand their role to that of a visual media specialist and advisor on how best to communicate the screen idea. Mukherjee had experience with this during a previous project, *Combat Kids* (2010), and discusses the important role of that process in allowing the project to take off. Using a ‘vox pop’ mini-documentary, Mukherjee and the producers were able to demonstrate the popularity of the source book among children, in order to highlight its marketplace potential.



Figure 2: Combat Kids visual pitch video.

The pitch also contained interviews with families who were experiencing similar struggles as the characters in the book and all of this helped give the producers and financiers “a sense of the inevitable” (Mukherjee, see Appendix B).

That’s what you want, what you are pitching is a sense of inevitability, challenging people to not get in the way. You’re not asking to help; you’re asking to not get in the way, to get on board. I don’t mean to say that in a salesman way, that actually happens. Suddenly people feel excited about a project; it’s lovely. However good it is, however strongly argued, if you don’t get a sense of inevitability to see it, it’ll never happen. They’re never going to make it (Mukherjee, see Appendix B).

The practices of Independent filmmaking, specifically the role that the writer plays in communicating the screen idea, as described in the case studies of *Lore and Dead Man’s Burden*, demonstrates that a revision is needed in scholarship for how we categorise the labour roles in a film production. The case study of *The Mummy* reinforces the need for such a revision, based on the testimony of its on-set screenwriter, who highlights his immense responsibilities in the production. It can be impossible at times to accurately summarise the roles and responsibilities of any member of a production, especially the ones related to the screenwriter. The greater demands on screenwriters on such productions are a challenge but they also provide the writer with greater agency. The unorthodox methods that are sometimes employed by practitioners, particularly in independent productions, present the screenwriter with opportunities to enhance how they communicate the screen idea. In cases where the writer is also the director or the producer, the writing process becomes integral to the budgeting, the scheduling and other logistical stages of the production overall.

In this chapter, I not only aimed to explore some of the common challenges of filmmakers across the production cycle, but study the changing trends in digital cinema

production and how such practitioners view them. The findings depict a mode of production that currently borrows heavily from other commercially focused models that can slow down production of a film, in some case drawing it out over the course of nearly a decade, as in the case with *Lore*. A revision of these models, with a focus on the recent shifts in digital culture, can place far more control in the hands of filmmakers, from pre-production to distribution, and liberate the practitioner from the current institutional models. These models don't necessarily reduce the quality of the work; rather, they can result in an equally professional product thanks to ever-evolving technologies and resources (Christian 2011, 129).

One of the outcomes of the chapter is a clearer depiction of filmmaking in the independent sector of cinema, as well as the Fordist model in Hollywood. The chapter also explored the role of the writer in these productions. These interviews demonstrate that many independent productions exhibit a shift in production roles (with writers, directors and producers embracing additional roles on set or applying skills from other fields to their work). In all instances, the financial logistics of the productions impacted the screenwriter and their writing of the script. These outcomes suggest that a knowledge of financial, as well as filming, practicalities on a set can be beneficial to the writer in this sector, where typically writers do not have the same freedom of creative expression as in bigger budget productions. It also suggests that an inclusive culture throughout the production, where the writer is welcomed to set, involved in the realisation of the script to screen and part of the post-production process, can benefit the production greatly.

The second finding of this research builds on the previous point, and demonstrates that the role of the writers are greatly enhanced in these productions. No longer a typist, but an advisor to the production, they are heavily involved in early development processes, a collaborator with the director, and in one case, a collaborator with the film's star. This is very different from typical Hollywood productions, where the writer can be an expendable member of the production, and in many instances, banned from coming on set.

The key finding from these interviews is that the role of the writer can change throughout the different stages of film production. Especially in the funding stages, it is evident that the screenplay has significant influence over the nature of the production to come, but more importantly, it demonstrates how flexible writers must be in their process of creating and also communicating the screen idea.

Practice-led Research:
At the Crossing

AT THE CROSSING

The Visual Script



AT THE CROSSING



"There was a heavy thud. A couple of seconds later, I felt a wave come through the room. The thick concrete walls were bent like rubber. I thought war had broken out.

We started to look for Khodemchuk but he had been by the pumps and had been vaporised. Steam wrapped around everything; it was dark and there was a horrible hissing noise.

There was no ceiling, only sky; a sky full of stars. A stream of ionising radiation was shooting starwards, like a laser beam. I remember thinking how beautiful it was."

Sasha Yuvchenko, Chernobyl engineer
Interviewed in 2004





AT THE CROSSING

AT THE **CROSSING**

PRELIMINARY PRODUCTION NOTES

Genre: Drama

Running Length: 90 mins Approx

FRONT CREDITS

A

Bridge House Production

AT THE CROSSING

Written for the screen by

John Finnegan

AT THE CROSSING PRODUCTION NOTES

- Synopsis
- Setting
- Characters
- Writer's Statement
- Treatment
- Screenplay

SYNOPSIS:

Two sisters living in a remote farm kidnap a local poacher and force him to help find a horse that was stolen from them. On their journey they encounter the various threats of the landscape, and both sisters come to realise the lengths they will go to in order to preserve their home.

SOFIYA (30s) and OLENA (18) are sisters who struggle to survive on their farm in a highly radioactive land. They are the victims of local poachers who have stolen a horse that is vital to the day-to-day running of their farm. Olena wants to leave the farm and move to the city, while Sofiya is determined to find a way to survive.

One of the poachers, ANTON (20s) is arrested by a local police officer VITALIY (40s) and Sofiya uses this as an opportunity to reclaim her livestock. She frees the poacher from custody on condition that he take them to his people. Doing so requires them to venture into the forbidden exclusion zone.

Olena is tasked with taking Anton to an old summer house by a lake while Vitaliy searches for his missing prisoner. During this time, Olena and Anton become close. Sofiya joins them a day later and the three continue on their journey.

They arrive at a village, Yaniv, where Anton believes the rest of his people are based. However, Sofiya finds that the camp has been abandoned recently and all the livestock are dead. A local family take them in, and it is here that she learns the camp was destroyed by the local villagers.

Olena wants to return home, but Sofiya refuses to believe the horse is dead. She presses Anton for more information, but Anton reveals that he doesn't want to continue. Anton is young and scared, pressed into working for the poachers, and does not wish to return to them. The matriarch of the local family tells Sofiya of another poacher camp further ahead in the hills. The three continue.

The dynamic of the group has changed. Tensions are high. The further they venture, the harder it is for Sofiya to continue. She shows signs of illness, an illness she's been concealing from her sister for a while.

They arrive at an abandoned city close to the reactor. Here, Anton uses an opportunity to escape Sofiya's custody. Sofiya gives chase, but her illness worsens. The sisters are taken in by a local orphanage, who care for Sofiya. She is unconscious now and suffering from fever. Olena learns of from the youngsters in the orphanage about criminal men hiding in the hills. That night, Olena is visited by Vitaliy who has come to take them home, but Olena gives him the slip and goes into the hills to find these men, believing them to be the poachers.

She enters the poacher camp and finds a herd of horses ready to be slaughtered. Olena finds her horse and takes it away. Suddenly, she encounters Anton, who has since been pressed back into working for the poachers. He lets her go and Olena flees with the horse in tow.

Returning home with the horse is difficult. She gets lost, and is pursued by wolves. The horse proves difficult to handle, and eventually the animal stops following her altogether. Olena realises the animal is pregnant and ready to give birth. Olena stays throughout the night in order to help the animal give birth, fending off the hungry wolves in the darkness.

The next day Sofiya wakes in a hospital bed, distressed to find her sister is missing. Olena however is crossing through the exclusion zone and into familiar territory again, her farm visible in the distance and the horse and foal following close behind.

INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS:

30 years after the worst nuclear disaster in history, Chernobyl, a former cultural centre, has become a 'dead zone' in northern Ukraine. Pripyat, the city founded in 1970 to house the workers for the nearby Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, sits at the heart of this barren landscape. An area once thriving, it will remain contaminated and uninhabitable for centuries to come. However, a small pocket of almost five hundred locals who refuse to leave their home are proving otherwise.

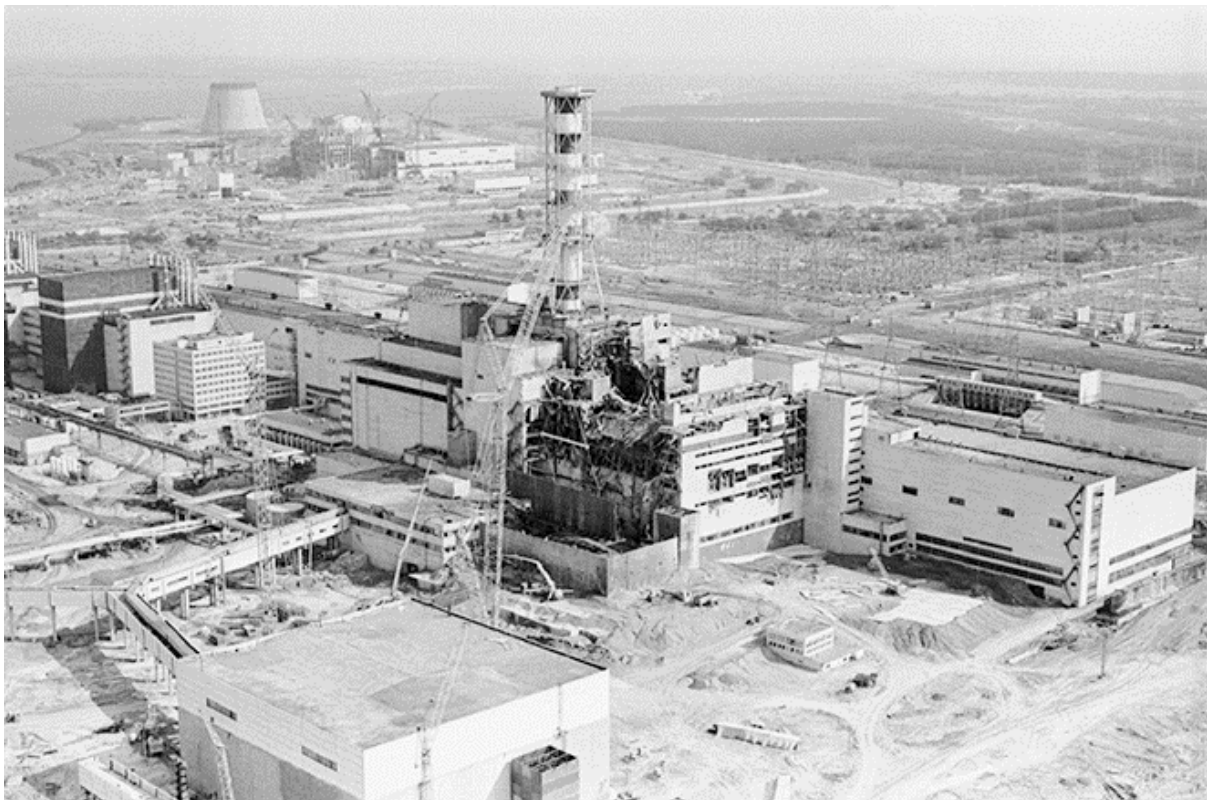


Figure 1 Reactor 4 of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant (Photo: Getty Images).

Chernobyl, which means "black grass" or "black stalks", was the crown village of Lithuania's Grand Ducy. In 1569, the province housing Chernobyl became part of the Kingdom of Poland and when Russia, Prussia, and Austria dissolved Poland, Chernobyl became a part of the Russian Empire in 1793. In the last half of the 18th century, Chernobyl became a major center of Hasidic Judaism; however, the Jewish population suffered greatly in the early 1900s when many Jews were killed by the Black Hundreds, an ultra-nationalist movement in Russia. In the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1920, the city was taken first by the Polish Army, and then by the

Red Army, before finally being incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1921. Development on the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant began in 1977.

On April 26, 1986, a power output surge during a systems test forced workers to perform an emergency shutdown. However, the power output spiked even more, which led to an explosion at reactor No. 4 at 1:23am. Two workers died instantly. Further explosions and a fire released highly radioactive material into the atmosphere. The release of nuclear fallout at Chernobyl was 400 hundred times higher than that of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Both mechanical malfunction and human error were cited as the causes of the disaster.

At the time of the disaster, 49,400 people lived in Pripyat. More than 24 hours after the first explosion, residents were ordered to evacuate, but by this time, many had already suffered varying degrees of radiation poisoning. They were told that the evacuation wouldn't last long and to leave their personal belongings. Most of those residents, however, never returned. Their homes and belongings remain for the most part untouched since the evacuation, as though frozen in time.



Figure 2 The abandoned city of Pripyat.

Radiation pumped into the air for 10 days. A large containment structure known as "the sarcophagus" was built to capture the materials. The structure trapped about 200 tons of nuclear fuel and debris that had melted through the floor and hardened. By May 14, about 116,000

people, who lived within a 19-mile radius of the nuclear plant had been relocated. In the following years, 220,000 more people moved into less contaminated areas and a 19-mile zone of alienation was established. Many settled in Slavutych, a city built shortly after the disaster for power plant workers and their families. To this day, any business or residential activities in the zone are strictly prohibited except for monitoring the power plant and installations to study nuclear safety. Some 3,000 workers are currently employed inside the zone of alienation, but they do not live there. Workers are regularly monitored for radiation and can only work a limited number of shifts per week. Workers are needed at the site because the remaining 3 reactors, although no longer operational, still contain nuclear fuel that needs to be monitored. The site is to be cleared by 2065.

Not everyone was evacuated. Some residents, mostly elderly people, refused to evacuate the zone or returned illegally. The approximately five hundred who still live there today reside in homes with signs that read: "owner of this house lives here."



Figure 3 A group of three girls living in the Chernobyl area head to their prom. (Photo: Michael Forster Rothbart).

Immediately afterward much of the wildlife in the area died of radiation, and a nearby 4000 acre pine forest turned red and died. It would become known locally as “the Red Forest”. The area around Chernobyl had been greatly abused before the accident. Two world wars were fought on the ground there. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin built collective farms and moved in

many thousands of farm workers. The nearby marshes, which were of worldwide significance, were partially drained by canals and turned into wildlife barren farm fields.

Today, however, the area has rapidly returned to something like the original forested, riparian, and marshy condition. Though much of the wildlife died, many species began to survive and reproduce. Many have disappeared.



Figure 4 An abandoned farm in the exclusion zone.

There was no hunting. People were not allowed in and the deer had radiation levels many times the officially declared “safe” level. Within a decade or so, it was noticed that roe deer, fox, moose, bears, feral pigs, lynx, and hundreds of species of birds were in the area, many seeming to thrive. Soon there were reports of an animal feared in Russian folklore, the wolf.



Figure 5 A wolf in the Chernobyl exclusion zone (Photo: Interet-general.info).

In 2008, the Ukraine reintroduced European bison to the zone. Also introduced was the Przewalski's, a rare horse, which is thought to be close to the world-wide extinct original horse. Still there are those who say things are far from well in the area. There are mutations, some obvious and some not. Reptiles and amphibians were hard hit. The re-created forests lack biodiversity.



Figure 6 The endangered Przewalski horse (Photo: Patrick Pleul//AFP/Getty Images).

The horses are in decline. Some blame poachers hunting for food. It is not known if people are that foolish, and others blame radiation harming a rare horse that was already endangered from its brush with extinction.

At the Crossing is inspired by this devastating event, and the arena of this story draws heavily from the Chernobyl exclusion zone.

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES:

Sofiya was born in the city, far away from the hardships of life on the farm. A victim of abuse at home, she sought refuge with her grandmother, her Babushka, in the country. After the death of her mother, her Grandmother rescued her from her father and Sofiya made this land her home. Now 28, Sofiya continues her Grandmother's philosophy on the importance of home and community above all else. She practices Orthodox Christianity, speaks both Russian and Ukrainian and is single. At 5ft 6in, she doesn't meet the typical physical traits of a farmer in these lands and she maintains a simple and practical appearance in her day to day life. She has few identifiable marks, but her clothes mask a series of fading scars on her slim frame. Sofiya drinks rarely, but only because she is quick to temper when she does. She combines her hobbies with that of the responsibilities of a farmer and home maker. Sewing and fabric design are skills that come in handy on the farm. She is good with animals, and is suited to farming. Her most significant possession is a Second World War sniper rifle, handed down by her Grandmother. Though schooled in the city, she is ashamed of her education, having realised much of what she was taught was propaganda. She doesn't trust her abilities now.

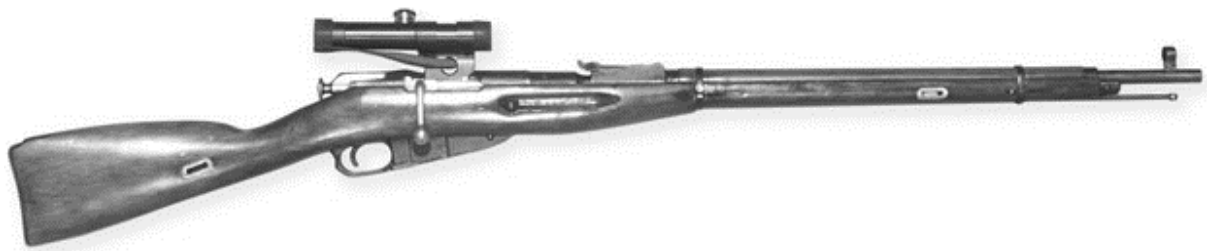


Figure 7. A Second World War Soviet sniper rifle (image from mauser.org).

Olena is the younger sister of Sofiya. About to turn 18, she is at a crossroads in her life, faced with staying and helping to run the farm with her sister, or leave for the big city with her friends from school. Like all teenagers, Olena likes to have her freedom, and finds ways to make the most of the rare pleasures the small village offers. She and her friends will happily stay out all night long before sneaking home before dawn, only to relive the experience the very next night. Olena has her sister's temper, and has involved herself in more than enough fights at school to draw the attention of Sofiya. But now her friends are leaving one by one, embracing the opportunities that adulthood provides, and the allure of the city. If it wasn't for Sofiya, Olena would have already left. She doesn't share the same loyalty for the land that Sofiya does. But it is not from a lack of interest or concern. Olena is a far more complex person than the meagre society around her will ever recognize – her sister can see this complexity, and it is something she fears will change Olena one day for better or worse.

Vitaliy is a man who gets the job done. Though only in his 40s, he is a battle weary officer, Vitaliy has been struggling to hold the fabric of this torn community together for as long as he can remember. He never forgets a face and never closes the door behind him. He leaves a piece of himself in every crime he investigates – which is more and more these days. If you get in his way that is your problem. Vitaliy is a local man, born and bred. He has grown up in the shadow of the reactor, lost friends to the evacuation, and family to the sickness. He has seen the land decimated by invisible forces and the disappearing locals at the hands of bankruptcy, intimidation and a band of local poachers who have struck fear in the heart of an already ageing community.

Anton comes from the city, and represents the growing threat of the Mafia within this region. They are involved in poaching and illegal livestock trading, but are more famous for their involvement in human trafficking. His presence in the area is of great concern to the locals. Anton might look like he doesn't scare easily, but inside he feels trapped in this way of life and is looking to escape. He seeks the life he never had in the city, a quiet life that Sofiya and Olena have come to take for granted. His most cherished possession is a religious medallion which he uses to keep himself from falling too far into the life.

WRITER'S STATEMENT:

One of my earliest memories is helping my father to build his house. I remember being given a toy cement trowel and following my dad as he meticulously checked and rechecked every brick. In the years after I witnessed my father give everything for his home. He would leave at five in the morning, and return at eight at night. His eyes would be closed from dust, his hair stained black by tar. He worked on the roads, and this was his routine, day after day, for thirty years. He did this to put a roof over our heads.

Two years ago I discussed with my sister about what we would do with the house when it passed on to us. I wanted to keep it, but she wanted to sell it. Her point of view was understandable, after all she had not been born when the house was being built. It didn't hold the same sentimental value for her as it did for me. I tried to explain to her that she was in fact the reason he built the house in the first place, our previous apartment not spacious enough for another child. She still didn't see the significance.

It made me realise that for most people 'home' is something that is taken for granted. It's something that is given to us. Something to be bought and sold. For others however, 'home' is something else. It is built, it is cherished, and it is handed down to the next generation. The things many take for granted, are for some, all they have. For the people of this region, it is their identity. It is who they are, and it is cultivated through routine. They do the same things every day. It is how they give purpose to their life in a land that more and more tries to deny them their identity. They do this, because for them, it's all they've ever known.

At the Crossing tells the story of two sisters who continue their family legacy in a similar land. They continue the routine, and they refuse to surrender. It is a story about hope and survival in the most inhospitable environment on earth, a place where nothing is said, and where everything *has* been said. They show us that home is an idea worth fighting for.

The screenplay uses the wildlife as a motif to represent both the frailty of the endangered community that exists in this region, and the ferocity of those who refuse to give up their home, seen in the story through those at risk, the horses, and those who thrive, the wolves. It invites audiences to place themselves in this world and to challenge their own values of home and community. Take shelter.

TREATMENT:

‘At the Crossing’ is a gritty portrayal of life in the region devastated by nuclear radiation. Set ten years after an environmental disaster, it follows two sisters, SOFIYA (28), and OLENA (18), who survive on their late grandmother’s farm. When the farm is raided by poachers, and their prized stallion is stolen, they embark on a treacherous journey through the forbidden exclusion zone, to find those responsible and retrieve the stolen animal. The story is about home and community, and the lengths people will go in order to preserve their way of life.

Teenage girls leaving school. One girl in particular, OLENA (17) walks down a country road. At the family farm, her sister, SOFIYA (28), is struggling to cope with a pain in her stomach. The veneer of pain has become a factor of life, and she hides it well from Olena.

Olena and Sofiya see a pup wolf roaming their farm. Sofiya tries to shoot the wolf with a Second World War sniper rifle, handed down by her grandmother. The wolf is scared away by VITALIY, a police officer and friend to the family, who has found one of the poachers, a youngster, hiding in the tall grass. This is ANTON (early 20s).

Sofiya haunts the local police station - a small cottage - to get any information she can about the poacher. Meanwhile, Olena is troubled by news that one of her best friends is moving to the city, something which Olena has dreamed of for some time.

The sisters are threatened by strangers in the night, poachers looking to send her a message. Their identities are never revealed, but Sofiya understands their intentions. Sofiya goes to Vitaliy to demand that Anton be held accountable. Vitaliy is concerned for Sofiya. He tells her that Anton is part of the local mafia. “They don’t just trade in animals Sofiya.” In the days after, Sofiya helps Olena to celebrate her 18th birthday. We see a flashback of a YOUNG GIRL (10), one of the sisters based on her appearance, helping their GRANDMOTHER (70s) train a prized stallion.

Sofiya wakes in the night to another disturbance. She ventures outside, armed with the rifle, and finds Vitaliy sitting in the porch keeping watch over the farm. The next morning, Sofiya goes out to check on Vitaliy but instead finds a former poacher turned farmer, PAVLO (40s) calling for her. Pavlo comes to warn her, but also to tell her where the poachers are based. Sofiya and Olena visit a local Babushka, a former comrade of their grandmother in the war and an advisor in times like this. She tells Sofiya “death didn’t scare me, starvation scared me.” Sofiya and Olena argue about what they should do. Olena wants to leave and go to the city. Sofiya is loyal to this home and wishes to stay. Sofiya cannot sleep and gets dressed. She goes to the police station, now closed for the night, and breaks Anton out of his holding cell. Sofiya charges Olena with bringing Anton to their grandmother’s house by the river, inside the

exclusion zone. Sofiya remains at the farm while Vitaliy comes to question her about Anton's whereabouts. She pleads ignorance and Vitaliy leaves. Olena and Anton get to know each other on their travels.

Olena brings him to an abandoned school not far from the cottage so that Anton can get his bearings. He wants to escape, and she is happy to oblige. While leaving the school they encounter vicious dogs. Olena and Anton are separated but Anton saves her life by firing a warning shot with the sniper rifle. The dogs flee

Back at the cottage, Olena is shaken up by the events and goes for a swim in the river. Anton joins her and she teaches him to swim. She is happy - until she sees Sofiya standing at the river-bank. Sofiya, having found the empty bullet shell in the rifle, knows something happened but Olena won't say. Sofiya warns Anton to keep his distance from Olena from now on.

The next morning the three set out to find the poachers camp. While trying to cross the river, Olena slips and falls in. She is carried under by the rapid current. Eventually she is rescued by a local man. They are taken to a town called Yaniv, populated by only a few families. One of the locals MYKOLA (40s) recognizes Anton and threatens his life. The sisters explain their situation and upon realising their lineage he lets them inside. Two older women, MAMA and VIRA, are not as welcoming.

Another flashback appears, this time of the young girl at the cottage by the river, watching as her grandmother argues with a man. A flock of birds fly overhead, as though fleeing the area. The stallion in the barn is restless. The man leaves, but the stress of the incident gives the grandmother a heart attack.

Back in the present, Sofiya is taking a bath, when she feels another sharp pain in her stomach. It is worse than before. She suppresses the pain once again. The next morning, Mama and Mykola bring Sofiya to the location of the poacher camp. However, Sofiya is shocked to find that the camp has been burned to the ground and the animals all dead.

Olena is helping Vira in the fields. She asks the woman why they stayed here. Vira teaches her the importance of home and community. Then, Mykola and the other locals pick a fight with Anton and assault him. That evening, Sofiya is told by the locals that they destroyed the camp themselves, and the livestock within in order to frighten off the poachers. Meanwhile, Olena is caring for Anton, and comes to realise that he is just a scared young man who doesn't want to be part of the Odessa Mafia any longer.

Later, Sofiya tells Olena to pack their bags. Olena thinks they are going home, but Sofiya wants to continue on to find the poachers. Olena grows concerned for Sofiya's

obsession, fearing it will get them killed. Sofiya has lost patience and yells at Olena to fall in line. The next day Mama tells Sofiya of another camp which is supposed to be further ahead. The three continue on, however neither of the three are on speaking terms.

The pain starts to slow down Sofiya. Olena helps her by taking the rifle. They stop for a rest in a clearing in the forest and Sofiya teaches Olena how to use the rifle. Anton is busy trying to get a water well to work when two poachers pass through the area. Sofiya and Olena hide until the men are gone. Sofiya goes to a ridge to watch the poachers as they leave. Anton and Olena join her as they see the nuclear reactor in the distance.

We see a flashback of the young girl trying to revive her grandmother, but to no avail. She takes the stallion and rides the horse into town. Back in the present, the sisters and Anton enter the city of Pripjat, abandoned since 1986. It is snowing lightly now, as Olena confronts her sister about her illness. Meanwhile, Anton uses the chance to run away. Sofiya chases after him, pleading with him to return. She follows him to an empty building where the pain strikes harder than ever. Sofiya can't stand it anymore and falls to her knees. Anton comes to her, but rather than help her, he runs away. Sofiya passes out before Olena comes to rescue her.

Olena brings Sofiya to an empty apartment. She stays with Sofiya into the night. Then she hears a sound outside and peers out to find a group of men searching the city. Olena runs out to investigate and finds men with guns and flashlights. She tries to lure them away from Sofiya, but gets caught.

Olena is brought to a man named KIO who tries to calm her down. He explains that they are looking for one of their people that has run away. Kio suspects that Olena is not alone, that she is protecting someone, and Olena eventually gives up Sofiya's location. Olena and Sofiya are brought away by the group in an old Soviet military truck, leaving the contaminated landscape behind them.

Olena and Sofiya are taken to an orphanage. Sofiya is taken to get emergency medical attention, and Olena is brought into a canteen where she is told to wait. Moments later, a hundred children of all ages come in and sit down for their breakfast. Olena is nervous to be around the children but the staff make her feel welcome. Afterwards, Kio shows her to a dorm where she can get some rest. There she meets ANNA, a girl of similar age. Anna reveals that her roommate ran away days earlier. Anna is afraid that she has been taken by a group of thieves that live in the hills, a folk legend that is told to stop the younger children from running away.

We see a flashback of the young girl returning to her grandmother, unable to get help for her. By now her grandmother has died. The young girl looks up to see a young Sofiya

standing with her. The child is revealed to be Olena. In the present Olena sits next to Sofiya in a treatment room in the orphanage. She watches as her older sister sleeps. Then Vitaliy enters. Olena and Vitaliy sit in the canteen and talk. Vitaliy scolds her for coming so far, and insists he is taking them home in the morning. The next morning, Vitaliy enters Olena's room to find that she and Anna are gone. Anna is taking Olena into the hills where the thieves live.

Anna takes Olena as far as she can go and then Olena continues on. She treks all day until arriving at a poacher camp where dozens of horses are held in captivity, soon to be slaughtered. She searches the barns carefully and finds a single stallion. She is overwhelmed, but upon trying to escape with the horse, she encounters Anton who is now working again for the poachers. Olena aims the rifle at him, but lowers it again upon realising he won't call out. Anton helps her to escape, before quickly returning to his work.

The journey home is plagued by difficulties. Olena loses her way, and the horse proves difficult to handle. They are hunted by wolves and the elements slow them down. The poachers catch up with them and they shoot at the stallion, but it runs away. Olena takes her sister's rifle and fires a single shot in the direction of the men. She is horrified to find that she has killed one of them. The poachers back off. She catches up with the horse later in the woods, only to find that it is lying on the ground. She checks to see if it is injured, and checks her heartbeat. To her shock, she finds a second heart. Olena realises the horse is pregnant, and works to keep the horse safe and calm as it gives birth. She scares off the wolves, and helps to deliver the foal in the final stages. They survive the night.

The next day Sofiya wakes in a hospital, distressed that Olena isn't with her. Olena meanwhile leaves the exclusion zone and returns to her home with the horse and foal in tow. In the weeks afterwards, Vitaliy comes to visit Sofiya and Olena on the farm. Sofiya is now with child, and she watches from the house as Olena and the horse plough the field. Vitaliy warns that the poachers will return. After he leaves, a pup wolf crosses a nearby field. Olena grabs the rifle and takes aim.

At the Crossing
by
John Finnegan

Draft 12
14/06/16

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AT THE CROSSING



1	EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE - DAY	1
	A rusting radiation sign.	
	A decaying landscape, where nothing is said, but where everything has been said.	
2	EXT. SOFIYA'S FARM - CONTINUOUS	2
	A stream next to a field.	
	A woman dips a bucket into the stream and removes it again. This is SOFIYA, 28.	
	Sofiya holds a GEIGER COUNTER from a bygone era to the water. It doesn't react.	
	Sofiya lets slip a feint smile.	
3	MOMENTS LATER	3
	Sofiya carries two buckets of water towards a FARMHOUSE.	
	She notices a man, 20s, standing by the fence, petting TWO HORSES in the field. This is ANTON.	
	Sofiya stops in her tracks.	
	She hides the water by a wall.	
	When she looks up again, the man is gone.	
	She scans the environment, but finds no evidence of him.	
	Sofiya HEARS the DOOR CLOSE.	
	Emerging from the farmhouse is OLENA, 17. She has a rucksack over one shoulder and waves to her sister as she leaves for the day.	
	Sofiya sees her off.	
	Sofiya returns for the water, gives another scan of the area to see that she is alone, and continues on her way.	
4	LATER	4
	The two horses are pulling a plow across the field, while Sofiya guides them in front.	

5 EXT. SOFIYA'S FARM - NIGHT

5

The reflection of the moon in the stream. The shadow of several figures in the field.

A horse box in the field.

Flashlights can be seen nearby.

The SOUND of MEN struggling. The SOUND of a HORSE GRUNTING and KNICKERING.

One of the men struggles with the horse, tugging on its reigns. The horse slips on the ground, pulling the man down with him.

The horse lets out a cry of pain.

POACHER #1
Look what you did?

POACHER #2
Give me a hand --

Another cry from the horse as they try to move it.

POACHER #1
It's leg is broken. Leave it.

POACHER #2
What a waste.

The second, LARGER HORSE is violently forced into the horse box. It's panicked eyes fill the small side window.

The light is sucked completely from the horse box, as the rear door is locked with a BANG.

Only darkness now. The SOUNDS of the ANXIOUS HORSE.

The SOUNDS of PEOPLE ENTERING THE TRUCK.

The SOUND of THE ENGINE STARTING UP.

The horse grows more anxious.

The truck pulls the horse box away to reveal a small FARMHOUSE in the background.

The remaining wounded horse rests on the grass. It breathes heavily - white clouds shoot from its nostrils. Possibly it's final breaths.

Sofiya emerges from the house. She shows signs of mistreatment.

(CONTINUED)

- 5 CONTINUED: 5
- She carries a SECOND WORLD WAR SNIPER RIFLE in hand. She takes aim and fires.
- One of the poachers, Anton, is hit in the back and falls in the darkness.
- Sofiya reloads and takes aim again at the truck as it escapes. She fires again --
- It pierces the rear of the truck.
- 6 EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS 6
- The truck towing the horse box races through the country road.
- It passes A GROUP OF TEENAGERS running on the road, taking shelter under their jackets from the rain. Olena is among them.
- The truck almost runs them off the road.
- One of the girls flips them off, the others watching as it drives away.
- Olena traces the direction from where the truck came.
- 7 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - CONTINUOUS 7
- A wider view of the landscape - sprawling and impotent. Rusting vehicles, leafless trees.
- 8 EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS 8
- The teenagers continue to hurry.
- Olena takes notice of a FARMER taking shelter in his farm nearby, trying to get in out of the rain.
- The truck is out of sight now.
- 9 EXT. CROSSROADS - LATER 9
- The girls part ways at a crossroads.
- Olena continues on alone.
- 10 EXT. SOFIYA'S FARM - MOMENTS LATER 10
- Olena arrives at the damaged gate of the farm.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 10

A sign on the wall nearby reads *"OWNER OF THIS HOUSE LIVES HERE"*.

11 DAWN 11

The rain is letting up.

A breeze blows the clothes on the washing line.

LOCAL POLITSIYA are scouring the farm for evidence.

12 INT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER 12

The geiger counter on the table CRACKLES as the wind blows outside.

A warm home, but one that is need of repair. Firewood is stacked by a fireplace, and dust gathers on old photographs.

Olena is tending to Sofiya's cuts on her face. Sofiya notices a tear in Olena's sweater.

SOFIYA
You've been fighting again.

OLENA
They were asking for it.

Sofiya is unimpressed.

They HEAR a DISTURBANCE outside as the police start shouting --

Sofiya grabs the rifle and Olena follows her --

13 EXT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 13

They emerge from the house, pushing passed the sheets on the washing-line, to reveal a large field before her.

Olena looks with fascination. In the distance, a WILD PUP explores the field. The police are trying to scare it off.

Sofiya takes aim --

Olena sees the gun --

OLENA
What are you doing?

SOFIYA
Stay back --

(CONTINUED)

OLENA

Sofiya, it's alone. It's probably lost.

SOFIYA

It's the lone dogs you have to be careful of.

Sofiya tightens her aim. Olena grows more alarmed for the animal's safety.

OLENA

Sofiya, stop!

She pushes the gun away. However, Sofiya is no longer looking at the pup, now distracted by something else.

OLENA

What?

Sofiya looks through the scope once more --

SOFIYA

There --

She puts the rifle over her shoulder and begins hurrying towards the adjacent field. The police move as well in the direction.

As they close in, Olena notices a police officer, VITALIY, early 40s, armed with a shotgun, and closing in on their target.

Sofiya sees Vitaliy and the gun, and realizing the seriousness of the situation, slows down --

SOFIYA

Stay back Olena.

VITALIY

Sofiya --

The man motions for them to fall back as he takes aim --

Anton, the wounded poacher, emerges from the grass. He is holding his side, bloodied from a bullet wound.

ANTON

Don't shoot!

Sofiya and Olena watch as he is arrested.

A small renovated cottage in the centre of the village.

(CONTINUED)

Vitaliy lights a cigarette.

Sofiya lights a cigarette also, and takes a much needed drag.

SOFIYA

Viktoriya Mackhnanov and her son moved to the city. Did you hear? Forced off their farm. The Government is cutting our benefits again. What else are we supposed to do, *except* leave?

The police officers pretend to know of this.

SOFIYA

This is how they're getting rid of us. It didn't work during the evacuation, so here we are. Fear and starvation.

VITALIY

You give them too much credit.

Sofiya takes another drag on the cigarette.

SOFIYA

So, will he survive? That's why I'm here, isn't it? A man trespasses on my farm, steals my livestock --

OFFICER #1

You shot him in the back.

SOFIYA

I wasn't aiming for his back.

VITALIY

Sofiya --

SOFIYA

Why is it when the men around here put their hands on a woman, it's always the women who end up in the police station?

OFFICER #1

Had you seen this man before last night?

SOFIYA

Yes. I saw him yesterday morning. He was surveying the farm.

(CONTINUED)

OFFICER #2

Surveying?

SOFIYA

Checking the place out. I didn't
take any notice though. It happens
--

OFFICER #2

People check out your farm?

SOFIYA

It's the only farm for twenty
miles that grows anything. It's
the water - it's not tainted.

VITALIY

Sofiya, Anton wants to press
charges.

Sofiya smirks in disbelief.

VITALIY

I warned you about that rifle.

SOFIYA

Every farmer has a gun. We use
them to scare off predators.

VITALIY

Not every woman goes around with a
sniper rifle.

SOFIYA

I find it keeps people at a
distance.

Sofiya takes a frustrated drag on her cigarette --

SOFIYA

Vitaliy, are you going to find my
livestock? Or should I follow the
Mackhnanovs?

The remaining wounded horse sits in a bed of hay,
protected by a feeble enclosure.

Beside the male is a second enclosure, identical but
empty, and with A BROKEN GATE.

Sofiya is in the field, attempting to plough the entire
piece of land herself. She is wearing an OLD MILITARY
CAPE for warmth as she struggles against the frozen
ground.

16

INT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

16

Olena is busy with her schoolwork at the kitchen table. She breaks for a moment and watches Sofiya outside.

Suddenly the solution to her math problem becomes apparent. She quickly jots down the solution and moves on.

Sofiya enters, sweating, and fills a glass of water.

SOFIYA

I could use your help out there,
when you're finished.

Olena doesn't respond, just keeps working.

SOFIYA

Do you need any help?

OLENA

No.

SOFIYA

I was always terrible at numbers
anyway.

OLENA

Why are you wasting your time out
there? The ground is frozen.

SOFIYA

We can't afford to wait anymore.

Olena packs her things and leaves.

SOFIYA

Where are you going?

OLENA

I'm finished.

Olena leaves the room --

SOFIYA

Good. Get your coat then.

17

EXT. BARN - DAY

17

A FEMALE RANGER and A VET work to treat the male horse in the enclosure.

Sofiya is distracted by the neighbouring empty enclosure.

FEMALE RANGER

Sofiya.

(CONTINUED)

Sofiya looks to the Ranger.

FEMALE RANGER

Keep him calm.

She kneels down next to the horse.

VET

I need you to hold her.

The vet performs a medical procedure on the animal.

VET

Almost there --

Sofiya watches the animal buckling with fear and anxiety.

SOFIYA

Can't we give him something?

VET

No.

Sofiya stands by the barn, unable to watch as the animal suffers on. As the vet finishes, the ranger takes off her gloves and joins Sofiya.

FEMALE RANGER

We've given him medicines for the infection.

FEMALE RANGER

(looking at the field)

What are you growing?

SOFIYA

Nothing so far.

SOFIYA

It's the ground. It's frozen. It used to be a potato farm, back when my grandmother was alive. We used to supply most of the town. Now --

FEMALE RANGER

This whole land is lifeless. Sometimes I think it's trying to hurt us.

FEMALE RANGER

Out of spite.

18

CONTINUED:

18

The ranger realises she's faraway --

FEMALE RANGER

Let me know if there's
improvement.

The ranger goes to her jeep.

FEMALE RANGER

(motioning to a
broken fence nearby)
You should fix that fence Sofiya.
And give my best to Olena.

The vet goes to the jeep.

The SOUND of the JEEP driving away. Sofiya approaches the animal. The horse is calmer now, resting on the bed of hay.

19

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

19

A YOUNG POLICE OFFICER brings Sofiya a large roll of fence wire.

Sofiya is distracted by ANTON, struggling to walk. He has a cut above his eye which wasn't there before. He is escorted by Vitaliy through the small station.

YOUNG POLICE OFFICER

How's Olena?

YOUNG POLICE OFFICER

I haven't seen her around lately.

She steals one more glance of Anton again, before taking the roll and leaving.

20

EXT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

20

Sofiya is walking away with the roll of fencing in hand, but cannot resist looking back again at the station.

21

EXT. SOFIYA'S FARM - DAY

21

Sofiya is busy repairing the fence that was destroyed by the truck. She lifts up one of the broken beams of wood and realigns it. The wood has a STAINED WHITE PENNANT BANNER affixed and streaming in the breeze.

In the mud next to the fence, she finds a small GOLD MEDALLION. She picks it up and studies it closely.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

She scans the empty back roads, then pockets the medallion, and continues working.

22 EXT. LOCAL WOODLAND - LATER

22

Olena is with her girlfriends, smoking and killing time.

FRIEND #1

Did you hear the news?

OLENA

No --

Friend #1 motions to --

FRIEND #2

He asked.

Olena's expression shifts --

OLENA

No. He asked?

The other girls embrace her as she nods --

OLENA

That's incredible --

Olena hugs Friend #2. It is a forced hug. Fake.

OLENA

I'm so happy for you. What does this mean --

FRIEND #1

She's leaving us --

FRIEND #2

I'm not leaving just yet.

FRIEND #2

He's got a job in the city. So --

FRIEND #3

I'm fucking jealous.

Olena shares her envy. She needs time to process this. The other girls can see.

OLENA

The city. That's so far.

Olena bursts into joyous laughter. Tears mix with joy.

FRIEND #2

Olena --

(CONTINUED)

22

CONTINUED:

22

FRIEND #1
C'mon lets celebrate --

The girl removes a bottle of vodka from her rucksack, and the mood of the group shifts again.

23

EXT. MARKET - DAY

23

Trucks being unloaded with bags of used clothes and boxes of food, by the locals.

Sofiya is browsing the market, making small talk with locals as she passes.

One of the organisers, PAVLO (40s), is busy unpacking the tins of food, as people come to collect their share.

Olena finds a surprisingly stylish and undamaged WINTER COAT among the pile.

Olena tries it on and looks at it in the mirror.

24

MOMENTS LATER

24

Olena is catching up to Sofiya --

MARKET MAN
Hey! Get back here --

A LARGE MERCHANT at the market is chasing after her --

Olena stops, puzzled.

MARKET MAN
Give it back --

OLENA
What are you talking about?

MARKET MAN
The jacket -- where is it?

He starts forcibly searching Olena's bag --

Sofiya intervenes --

SOFIYA
What's the matter with you?

MARKET MAN
The girl's a thief. She stole a coat.

OLENA
I didn't, he's lying.

(CONTINUED)

Sofiya looks to Olena. Then to the man --

SOFIYA
You're mistaken.

MARKET MAN
No, I'm not --

He goes to grab the bag again --

SOFIYA
Get away from her --

Sofiya strikes him. He falls.

The market falls silent.

Pavlo intervenes.

PAVLO
Get back to your table.

MARKET MAN
(picking himself up)
She stole a coat.

PAVLO
Nobody stole anything -- it's on
your table.

He sends the man away.

SOFIYA
You'll let him get away with that?

PAVLO
Would you like me to call the
police? Really?

MARKET MAN
I'm sure you'd love Vitaliy here,
wouldn't you?

Some of the locals grin at the implied joke at her
expense.

Sofiya is embarrassed.

Olena comes to the kitchen.

OLENA
Sofiya?

25

CONTINUED:

25

An otherwise empty house. Olena finds the medallion on the table and studies it.

OLENA

Sofiya?

26

EXT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

26

Olena goes out to the field and looks around --
She directs her attention to the barn.

27

INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

27

Olena finds Sofiya checking on the struggling horse,
still resting in the enclosure.

Sofiya HEARS A CREAK and reacts --

She points the rifle at her younger sister.

OLENA

It's me.

But Sofiya doesn't lower the rifle. She steps out from
the barn. Olena backs up.

SOFIYA

We're not alone.

The frozen breath of FOUR FIGURES in the darkness.

SOFIYA

(calling out)

Who's there?

She shines the light in their direction, but it does
little to penetrate the darkness.

The hint of MEN breathing in the darkness.

SOFIYA

Show yourselves.

She cocks the rifle.

OLENA

They can't see you.

Sofiya fires the rifle. The GUNSHOT ECHOES into the
night. The horse is startled. Olena jumps.

The signs of life vanish.

Sofiya holds her aim for a moment longer.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27

And then lowers the rifle.

28 INT. BARN - THE NEXT MORNING 28

Sofiya stands in the same place, staring out at the same spot on the field where the intruders stood last night.

Olena sits with the ranger and the vet as they give the horse an injection.

The horse closes his eyes, and the heavy breathing slowly comes to a stop.

The ranger stands up after a moment. She looks to Sofiya.

Sofiya goes into the back for a moment, while Olena continues to gaze at the lifeless animal. Sofiya returns again with a shovel in hand.

29 LATER 29

Olena watches as Sofiya begins digging a grave in the frozen ground, while the fallen horse rests under a tarpaulin nearby.

Olena walks back to the house.

30 EXT. SOFIYA'S FARM - THE NEXT DAY 30

Sofiya is chopping firewood, when Vitaliy arrives.

VITALIY

Sofiya?

Sofiya continues working --

VITALIY

Sofiya, can you stop for a minute?

VITALIY

You've taken up boxing now?

Sofiya stops.

VITALIY

I'm supposed to come down here and arrest you, you know that?

Sofiya slams the axe down again on a piece of wood --

She stops and looks to Vitaliy --

SOFIYA

Arrest me then.

(CONTINUED)

VITALIY

I'm not arresting you.

She picks up the axe again and returns to her work.

SOFIYA

That fat piece of shit.

VITALIY

He's not the reason you're angry.

SOFIYA

They're all in on it. Every one of them.

VITALIY

I know. And when we find something we'll tell you. But I need you to stop acting out. You hear me?

He produces a photograph of three men - cutthroats, every one of them. One BEARDED, one BALD, and one BUILT LIKE A TANK.

VITALIY

Did you ever see these men?

She studies the photograph --

SOFIYA

No.

VITALIY

(ref to the pictures)

Those people kill for a living. That should scare you.

SOFIYA

I'm not scared of these people.

VITALIY

These people don't just trade in animals Sofiya. Think about Olena too.

SOFIYA

I have work to do.

Vitaliy turns to leave.

SOFIYA

Do you know that they came to me again last night?

Vitaliy stops --

(CONTINUED)

SOFIYA

Did you know that? How long more
before I end up like Viktoriya and
the others?

She returns to her work.

INT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sofiya puts a small cake with a candle on the table.

Olena smiles as Sofiya lights the candle.

SOFIYA

Well?

SOFIYA

Blow it out.

Olena puffs and the candle is extinguished. Sofiya
smiles.

SOFIYA

For you.

Sofiya puts a poorly wrapped large gift before her. Olena
is surprised. She opens the gift to reveal the WINTER
COAT.

OLENA

How did you afford this?

Sofiya grins --

SOFIYA

Never mind how.

She kisses Olena on the head --

SOFIYA

My sister, all grown up.

Olena is speechless as she studies the coat.

Sofiya begins cutting the crude homemade cake.

EXT. VILLAGE - THE NEXT DAY

Olena and her friends are walking through town when they
encounter the young police officer. Friend #2 approaches
and kisses him. They hold hands and rejoin Olena and the
group.

Olena fidgets and behaves awkwardly as the young man
makes nervous eye contact with her.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG POLICE OFFICER

Olena.

Olena politely smiles, and turns to look in any other direction to avoid him. Then she catches sight of Anton smoking a cigarette at the police station entrance nearby.

FRIEND #2

Olena?

Olena realises she has missed part of a conversation.

OLENA

What?

FRIEND #2

What's with you?

INT. OLENA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Olena takes a photograph of Friend #2 and Olena, and then tears the photograph in two.

EXT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE - MORNING - FLASHBACK

A white pennant banner, affixed to the fence, ripples in the gentle breeze.

A YOUNG GIRL, 10-12, stands by the stallion. She is attempting to climb onto the horse, but failing.

An elderly woman watches on. The locals refer to them as BABUSHKA - beloved grandmother.

The child struggles to pull herself up, before falling back again.

She immediately climbs back on again but her frustration leads her to accidentally kick the horse - the horse reacts and the child falls again.

The child doesn't immediately stand up.

BABUSHKA

She doesn't trust you. It's important to make them trust you. I want you to grow up together and be a team.

The girl stands up.

BABUSHKA

Again.

(CONTINUED)

The girl puts one hand on the reigns --

BABUSHKA

Slowly.

The girl places her hand on the horse, gently rubbing the side of its head, before taking hold of the reigns with her other hand.

BABUSHKA

I've been by her side since the day she was born. Her mother saved my life. She knows me.

She puts one foot into the stirrups --

And then lifts herself up, and in one seamless move, lifts her leg over the animal and positions herself comfortably on the animal.

BABUSHKA

And you too, it seems.

She motions for the horse to move. The horse carries her slowly across the field.

BABUSHKA

Faster --

The girl motions for the horse to increase speed --

BABUSHKA

Faster child.

The horse gains great speed --

And then the child is tossed into the tall grass.

The horse comes to a stop, and the child sits up in the grass, the wind knocked out of her.

Sofiya and Olena finish repairing the broken fence.

A gust of wind causes the old stained pennant banner to snap in the wind.

SOFIYA

This should keep the dogs out at least.

Sofiya then removes the banner and lets it fly into the sky.

35

CONTINUED:

35

Olena smiles. She sees that Sofiya is looking curiously at her --

OLENA

What is it?

SOFIYA

You're smiling. Strange.

Sofiya grins as she snips a last piece of wire with a pliers.

36

INT. SOFIYA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

36

Sofiya gets out of bed and wraps a blanket around her.

Leaving the room --

37

EXT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

37

Sofiya cautiously emerges.

The intruder is Vitaliy, sitting on the porch bench with his shotgun at the ready. He is keeping vigilant watch over the farm.

Vitaliy doesn't look at her. He just keeps staring into the darkness.

Sofiya wraps up tighter.

38

INT. SOFIYA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

38

PAVLO (O.S.)

Sofiya get out here!

Sofiya is awoken by shouting --

39

EXT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

39

Sofiya emerges to find PAVLO, the same man who stood up for her in the market, days before.

PAVLO

What the hell is the matter with you?

SOFIYA

What are you doing here Pavlo?

PAVLO

I'm asking myself that same question.

(CONTINUED)

Sofiya is distracted, looking at the porch and wondering where Vitaliy is.

PAVLO

Hey --

She returns to the present --

SOFIYA

Go home Pavlo. I've got nothing to say to you.

PAVLO

You know the whole town is talking about you?

SOFIYA

Let them talk --

PAVLO

This is serious Sofiya.

SOFIYA

I know it's serious. Don't tell me it's serious. I've lost everything --

Olena comes out --

OLENA

Sofiya?

SOFIYA

Olena get inside --

OLENA

What's going on?

PAVLO

Jesus Christ -- Olena do as she says --

SOFIYA

Olena!

Olena returns inside again.

SOFIYA

(to Pavlo)

Don't you ever speak to her.

PAVLO

Sofiya -- I can tell you where to find your livestock.

Sofiya stops for a beat.

(CONTINUED)

PAVLO

If you still want to save this farm?

SOFIYA

You're serious? You're better not be playing games with me.

PAVLO

I can tell you where the camp is - where they keep the animals. Nothing more.

40 INT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 40

Olena listens from the window as Pavlo gives his directions.

41 INT. ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY 41

Olena is looking at an old photograph.

IN THE PHOTOGRAPH: Several young women, dressed in military uniforms pose nervously for the camera in the wilderness.

Olena puts down the picture again and continues to look around.

The home of an ELDERLY WOMAN, 80s. She sits on a chair as Sofiya brings her tea. The woman's face tells a story - one of survival against all odds. A battle weary woman.

The woman is repairing Olena's sweater while they talk.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

Come in my dear.

Olena enters slowly.

SOFIYA

I'll be back with your lunch.

The woman uses all her effort to make herself comfortable. Olena helps her.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

Is Sofiya taking care of you?

Olena smiles and nods.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

Good.

(CONTINUED)

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

She's going to need your help now.

OLENA

Babushka would know what to do.

The woman nods.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

If she were here she'd tell you to toughen up.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

Child, people have been trying take our farms since before we were born. Famine and war didn't drive us away. We're not going to be scared off by a few wild dogs.

Sofiya returns again with lunch on a tray, and rests it before her.

SOFIYA

Is she telling you her war stories?

Olena smiles.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

You don't know how that horse saved your grandmother's life back then.

SOFIYA

I've heard the stories.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

Bah. You only think you know.

SOFIYA

It wasn't even the same horse.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

That's not the point. You don't let anyone march in and take your home. Do you hear me?

The woman calms herself again.

Sofiya keeps herself busy --

SOFIYA

That was different.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

You're scared. I understand. It's not like it was back then.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

41

SOFIYA

And you weren't scared?

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

Of course.

ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR

But not of death. Starvation
scared us.

She returns the mended clothing.

42 EXT. SOFIYA'S FARM - EVENING

42

Sofiya and Olena are walking home.

They encounter TWO WOMEN leaving the farm with BUCKETS OF
WATER in each hand.

They stop as Sofiya and Olena approach.

OLENA

What are they doing?

SOFIYA

That doesn't belong to you.

The two women gesture, as though attempting to reason
with Sofiya --Sofiya violently knocks the buckets out of their hands.
Water spills on the road. Olena is surprised and puzzled.

SOFIYA

Go on --

The two women hurry away.

Sofiya watches them for a moment, before picking up the
buckets.

Sofiya and Olena carry the buckets back to the farm.

She can see that Olena is troubled by what happened.

SOFIYA

This is how it begins.

43 INT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

43

Sofiya sits opposite Olena at the table. They peel
potatoes and vegetables.

Sofiya looks at the potato in her hand.

(CONTINUED)

SOFIYA

This isn't going to work.

Olena looks to her --

SOFIYA

Getting that horse back is the only way. Otherwise we'll starve.

SOFIYA

Olena, you know it's true.

OLENA

We could leave.

SOFIYA

You'd prefer to go to the city?

OLENA

What's wrong with that? Why is that so bad?

SOFIYA

You don't understand.

She slams the knife on the table.

OLENA

Don't treat me like I'm a kid. What's your plan? Walk me through how you're going to find her? And what happens if you do find her, you think they're just going to hand her back to you?

SOFIYA

Pavlo told me they have a camp in Yaniv.

OLENA

That's your plan?

SOFIYA

It'll put food on the table. And it's better than nothing.

Olena is done.

OLENA

It isn't safe here anymore.

She stands up to leave --

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

OLENA

Everyone is purposely making
themselves sick by living here.
You think it's noble, but no one
cares.

She leaves --

OLENA

Come up with a better plan.

44 INT. OLENA'S BEDROOM - LATER

44

The medallion rests on the night-stand.

Olena cannot sleep.

She reaches for the medallion.

She studies the medallion and then closes her eyes. Her
hand slowly moves down under the quilt, and she rolls
over to face the wall, as though trying to escape the
world for a night.

45 INT. POLICE STATION, CELL - NIGHT

45

Anton is lying on his bunk, awake in the darkness.

The SOUND of DOORS OPENING OUTSIDE causes him to turn.

Then KEYS UNLOCKING his cell door. Anton sits up.

The door opens, and Sofiya enters slowly, rifle in hand.

Anton immediately backs into the corner --

ANTON

Guard!

Sofiya watches and waits for him to stop --

SOFIYA

No one can hear you.

Anton grows even more scared.

SOFIYA

Do you know who I am?

Anton doesn't respond.

SOFIYA

You and your friends robbed me of
everything.

(CONTINUED)

SOFIYA

Do you understand? I'm the woman
who shot you.

ANTON

Are you going to kill me?

SOFIYA

I know where the rest of your
group are. I can take you to them.

ANTON

Why would you do that?

SOFIYA

Because if you stay here, they'll
kill you. And because I want you
to help me.

SOFIYA

I want what's mine. I want what
you stole from me.

Anton is not entirely sure of what to do --

SOFIYA

Don't you want to go home?

INT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Olena comes to the kitchen and is stunned to find Anton
standing at the kitchen sink washing himself.

Sofiya enters and sees Olena --

OLENA

Where were you?

She is distracted by Anton. Terrified almost.

SOFIYA

This is --

OLENA

I know who he is.

Sofiya can tell her sister is having difficulty
processing the situation.

SOFIYA

COome with me --

She brings Olena into the bedroom.

47

MOMENTS LATER

47

Anton is drying himself and looking at their Babushka's accolades from the war.

OLENA (O.S.)
(shouting in next
room)
I don't care. I don't want him
here --

SOFIYA (O.S.)
He's not staying long.
Everything's going to be fine, I
promise.

48

INT. OLENA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

48

Olena is wiping tears from her eyes --

OLENA
You've brought him into our house.
Look what they did to us --

SOFIYA
Olena, stop crying. Calm down,
please.

She tries to comfort her sister, but her sister lashes out.

SOFIYA
Everything will be fine, I
promise. Look at me --

Olena starts breathing heavier --

OLENA
I can't --

Trying to catch her breath.

SOFIYA
Olena? Olena, breath --

She tries to help Olena.

49

EXT. EXCLUSION ZONE, BORDER - DAY

49

Olena is sitting in the grass with a rucksack and the rifle in hand.

Anton is trying to open a patch of the barbed fencing around the forbidden exclusion zone.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON

Here --

Olena stands up again and Anton helps her squeeze through.

ANTON

Careful. Okay.

Olena is through --

She tries to hold the barbed fencing. Olena is out of her comfort zone here. Anton squeezes through successfully.

He winces at the pain from his side. Olena is concerned.

ANTON

Lead the way.

They continue onwards.

50

INT. POLICE STATION, OFFICE - DAY

50

Sofiya is sitting in a makeshift interrogation room being questioned by Vitaliy and the other officers.

SOFIYA

I told you already. I don't know what you're talking about.

OFFICER #1

You're hiding him. He's a dangerous criminal.

SOFIYA

Search my house.

VITALIY

Where's your sister?

Sofiya looks at Vitaliy, as though offended by the question.

VITALIY

She's not at school. And she's not at home. We've checked.

SOFIYA

Kids skip school all the time.

SOFIYA

Why are you asking me anyway? I thought one of you would have been watching him.

(CONTINUED)

VITALIY

Someone set fire to Martyn Kravets' wheat field in the middle of the night. We were busy putting out the fire.

SOFIYA

That's unfortunate. But I'm sure he had it coming.

OFFICER #2

That's right, that thing in the market.

VITALIY

Sofiya, you don't want Olena getting involved in this.

OLENA

Olena is tougher than you think.

EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE - MORNING

Olena and Anton walk across the barren fields.

While walking through the woods, they come upon the corpse of a DEER, MAULED.

Olena is troubled by the sight.

LATER

Landmarks from a forgotten time.

Abandoned farms and few signs of wildlife.

Olena and Anton pass a farm when a DOG starts barking viciously.

Olena jumps at the sound, and despite being far from the dog, they keep a watchful eye as A MAN comes to investigate.

INT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sofiya is washing the dishes, when she looks out the window to see Vitaliy's patrol car in the distance.

She can make out Vitaliy watching from the driver's seat.

54 EXT. SOFIYA'S FARM - LATER 54

Sofiya is taking down the laundry from the line, and checks to see if Vitaliy is still waiting in his car.

The car is gone now. Satisfied, she returns inside.

55 EXT. THE LAKEHOUSE - EVENING 55

Olena and Anton arrive at a LAKE - Still and lifeless.

AN AGING COTTAGE, sits by the shore. It is as much a part of the environment now, and just as old.

Olena removes a key from her bag and unlocks the door.

It takes a push to separate the rotting wooden door from the frame.

Anton follows her inside.

56 INT. THE LAKEHOUSE - NIGHT 56

A house that has been unused for a while. Olena and Anton are sitting by the fireplace warming themselves.

Anton is finishing his supper.

ANTON

Did you grow up here?

OLENA

Not really. My grandmother used to take us here to get away. Her family built it during the war to hide from the Nazis.

ANTON

Is it just you and your sister?

OLENA

That's right.

ANTON

No one else?

OLENA

Why are you interested?

Anton shrugs.

Anton chooses to focus on his food for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON

You don't have to be afraid of me.
I'm not going to hurt you.

OLENA

I know you're not.

OLENA

You do as I say, agreed?

ANTON

Sure.

OLENA

Okay.

She puts her rucksack on the table and searches for a box of matches.

She takes the matches and proceeds to light a gas lamp overhead.

She lights the other lamps in the room and the cottage springs to life.

Then she is distracted by the SOUND OF RADIATION.

Anton is playing with a GEIGER COUNTER that was buried in her bag.

Anton is struggling to silence it.

Olena extinguishes the match and goes to Anton.

Olena takes back the Geiger counter and turns it off.

OLENA

It's not a toy.

Olena puts it back in her bag and places it next to the rifle.

ANTON

It sounds playful.

Olena grins, but only at his naivety.

OLENA

We need to make a fire.

Olena carries an axe to a chopping block and drops it next to a pile of lumber.

Anton sees the axe and realises the work that awaits.

(CONTINUED)

- 57 CONTINUED: 57
- He picks up a piece of wood, and places it on the block. Then he takes the axe and begins swinging it on the wood. The wood splinters and falls off the block. Anton places it on the block again and takes another swing.
- Olena returns inside.
- 58 INT. THE LAKEHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 58
- As she closes the door, she HEARS the SOUND OF SPLITTING WOOD.
- Satisfied, she goes to a press and retrieves a blanket.
- Another SOUND OF SPLITTING WOOD from outside.
- She sits on a ragged and worn sofa by the barren fireplace. She places the rifle under the chair by her feet.
- The RHYTHMIC SOUNDS OF ANTON CHOPPING WOOD accompany her as she rests.
- Wrapping herself in the blanket, her eyes drift --
- 59 THE NEXT MORNING 59
- Olena wakes to the SOUND OF SILENCE.
- She springs to her feet and looks around. She is alone.
- She notices her bag is gone from the table.
- 60 EXT. THE LAKEHOUSE - MORNING 60
- Olena emerges from the house.
- Anton is nowhere to be found.
- Olena quickly processes the situation --
- And runs back inside.
- 61 EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER 61
- Olena is scouring the woods with the rifle in hand.
- OLENA
- Anton!
- But there is no response.

62 LATER

62

Exhausted from searching, she stops for a rest.

She sits down and catches her breath.

She tries to unscrew the lid from her water canteen but fumbles.

In her anger she kicks it away and yells.

In the silence, she HEARS A DISTURBANCE nearby.

63 MOMENTS LATER

63

She pushes past the trees until she arrives at a small and peaceful section of the lake.

There she sees Anton bathing in the water.

She hurries down to the shore.

OLENA

Hey!

Anton turns in surprise and smiles --

ANTON

Do you know how long it's been
since I had a bath?

He splashes some water in her direction, as though mocking her.

He is soaking up the peaceful countryside.

OLENA

Get out.

ANTON

I'm enjoying myself too much.

OLENA

I said get out.

Olena then arms herself with the rifle and takes aim --

Anton looks at her, a little confused, before realising there is a WILD DOG standing by the far shore, studying the two humans.

ANTON

It's just one.

(CONTINUED)

OLENA
(to herself)
Precisely.
(to Anton)
Get out this instant.

Anton relents and wades towards her.

The dog leaves.

Then Olena realises that Anton is naked as he emerges from the water.

She is embarrassed, and he can see it.

She backs away as he grows closer.

ANTON
Lower the gun and pass me my
clothes.

She glances momentarily at his clothes --

He exploits the momentary lack of concentration and grabs the gun from her aggressively.

She backs away even further, afraid.

He picks up his clothes and puts on his trousers quickly, before taking Olena's bag and moving on up the stream.

OLENA
Give me the gun --

ANTON
No.

OLENA
It doesn't belong to you?

ANTON
You don't even know how to use
this.

He pulls back the lever and releases a bullet into the chamber.

ANTON
You're out of your depth.

Olena feels foolish upon realising the chamber was empty.

ANTON
Go home Olena.

Anton keeps walking, while Olena stays still.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (2)

63

Then he stops.

ANTON

Tell me how to get out of this place.

Olena looks at him, puzzled --

ANTON

And I'll give you your bag back.

He holds up her rucksack.

64 EXT. ABANDONED SCHOOL - DAY

64

Olena and Anton, with the rifle still in his possession, come upon a two story building and stop outside.

ANTON

What is it?

OLENA

Come on --

They approach.

65 INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

65

An empty classroom, frozen in time. A chalkboard in the front, old wooden tables and chairs. Bookshelves in the back.

They enter the room. Olena can see he's even more curious by *this* room --

Piled in the centre of the room are HUNDREDS OF GASMASKS, once black, now coated in a grey blanket of dust.

ANTON

Did you go to school here?

OLENA

No. I just come here to get away.

She goes to the chalkboard to find the remains of the day's lesson plan before the evacuation. The board is also littered with doodles and silly writings.

ANTON

I went to a school like this.

Olena cuts him a look --

ANTON

You're surprised?

(CONTINUED)

OLENA

No.

ANTON

I didn't end up where I am because
of my education.

OLENA

So why did you then?

ANTON

I didn't have a choice.

OLENA

Right.

ANTON

Have you always had a say in how
your life turned out?

Olena doesn't answer.

OLENA

This way.

CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Olena forces open a hatch that reveals a ladder to the
roof.

EXT. SCHOOL ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

The hatch to the roof opens and Olena emerges to a breeze
and a view.

She helps Anton to the top and they look out --

Anton can see the entire exclusion zone from the view of
the school.

OLENA

You should be able to get your
bearings from up here.

Anton is stunned by the view all around.

He opens Olena's rucksack and removes a beaker of water.
Then he tosses the bag to Olena.

She catches it, taken off guard. She is surprised.

ANTON

I can find my way from here.

Olena nods.

68

EXT. FOREST - LATER

68

Olena is walking home alone.

Then she freezes at the SOUND of another DISTURBANCE.

OLENA

Is someone there?

Another disturbance.

She turns around and finds a VICIOUS DOG standing behind her.

Olena is frozen stiff.

The dog starts growling.

She sees a SECOND DOG approaching not far behind.

She looks around - hints of movement all around.

Olena immediately turns and sprints as fast as her legs can carry her --

The dogs follow her.

She runs into the brush, towards the rusting remains of a truck.

She slides underneath the truck --

The dogs follow her under the truck as far as their heads will allow. They can't reach her.

Olena is terrified --

OLENA

Anton!

The barking of the dogs is deafening --

OLENA

Anton!

Then a GUNSHOT rings out and the dogs scatter.

Olena can see the animals disappearing into the brush.

Then Anton reaches for Olena.

ANTON

It's okay. It's over.

Olena calms herself.

69 EXT. THE LAKEHOUSE - EVENING 69
Anton helps Olena return to the house.

70 INT. THE LAKEHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 70
Anton puts down the rifle.
He can see that Olena isn't herself.
Olena tries washing the gravel from her hands. Her skin is sensitive from the cuts and grazes she received from lying under the truck.

71 EXT. THE LAKEHOUSE - LATER 71
Olena is filling a bucket of water from the lake.
She uses the Geiger counter to get a reading.
Satisfied, she returns to the house.

72 INT. THE LAKEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 72
Inside, Olena puts down the bucket.

73 EXT. THE LAKEHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 73
Olena removes her socks and her clothes until she is in her underwear. She ties up her hair in a ball.

74 MOMENTS LATER 74
Anton comes outside to see Olena swimming. He stares at her almost longingly.

75 MOMENTS LATER 75
Olena is bathing in the water, while Anton carefully tries to negotiate the swells in the lake.
Olena immerses herself in the relaxing water, letting it wash away the remnants of the events at the school.
Then a splash of water is kicked at Anton, much to his annoyance as she emerges again. She grins.
She goes under, and emerges elsewhere in the lake.
Anton pursues her.

76 MOMENTS LATER

76

Sofiya arrives at the house, and HEARS LAUGHING from the shore.

She quietly investigates, and is perplexed to find Olena and Anton laughing and playing in the water.

In the lake, Olena is distracted by the sight of Sofiya standing by the shore.

Their moment is over.

77 INT. THE LAKEHOUSE - LATER

77

Sofiya is warming herself by the fire, and eating dinner, while Olena dries her hair with a towel.

SOFIYA

Did he give you any trouble?

OLENA

No.

OLENA

Did the police come to you?

SOFIYA

(nodding)

Even brought me to the station and questioned me.

OLENA

Do they suspect you?

SOFIYA

Of course. They know I set fire to the Kravets farm. But what can they do? They don't have anything.

Olena is shocked at the extent of Sofiya's actions.

Sofiya puts down the food and notices the rifle. She takes it back into her custody again.

SOFIYA

You're sure he didn't give you any trouble?

OLENA

I told you.

SOFIYA

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

OLENA

I'm getting dressed.

Olena leaves the room.

Sofiya is staring out at the water. Anton is making himself comfortable by the fire again.

SOFIYA

I told you what I'd do to you if you put her in harms way.

ANTON

Nothing happened.

SOFIYA

Are you sure about that?

Sofiya produces the empty shell from the rifle and places it on the table.

ANTON

Nothing happened.

SOFIYA

You take a moment --

Anton is afraid. Sofiya returns to the view.

ANTON

I'm not like them.

Sofiya picks up the rifle.

SOFIYA

My Babushka was a sniper in the army during the war. She was separated and lost for days, when she found a stallion, standing in the woods.

SOFIYA

The way she used to tell it when we were kids, was that her coat was so reflective that it nearly gave away her position in the moonlight. A horse like that doesn't break easily, but this one was different. It didn't run away. It didn't have to trust her, but it did. And my Babushka was able to escape.

78

CONTINUED:

78

She looks to him, as if to check whether he understands the gravity of the situation --

SOFIYA

I'm trusting you.

She gets up --

SOFIYA

Don't go near her again.

79

EXT. EXCLUSION ZONE - DAY

79

The three walk all day.

Sofiya walks with Olena. Anton walks ahead.

SOFIYA

Babushka probably rode right through here during the war.

Olena nods --

Sofiya can tell something is up --

Sofiya keeps an eye on her sister while they walk.

80

LATER

80

Marching onwards across the forbidden outdoors they witness a EURASIAN LYNX crossing a stream.

The terrain is difficult and Sofiya occasionally helps Olena through the more unforgiving patches of land.

Anton catches her arm and supports her as she stumbles. Olena looks to him with a shyness. There is gratitude in her eyes, but not just for this.

81

EXT. RIVER BANK - LATER

81

A violent river. Loud gushing water.

Sofiya studies the wide river. She takes out the Geiger counter and holds it over the water. It reacts to the invisible contamination in the river.

She turns back to Olena and Anton.

SOFIYA

(shouting)

We can't cross here.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

She looks up to the sky - clouds are setting in, as well as frustration.

82 EXT. SHELTER - MOMENTS LATER

82

The three sit under a rickety shelter, as heavy rain pours. Sofiya is frustrated. Olena looks to her sister. Anton looks across the river.

The Geiger counter reacts faintly to the contaminated rain.

ANTON

What's that?

In the distance, a group of SCIENTISTS, DRESSED IN WHITE PROTECTIVE SUITS, walking across the landscape.

The three look on - a not so strange sight for the girls, but truly alien for Anton.

Eventually the scientists are a blur.

83 EXT. RIVER BANK - LATER

83

The rain has stopped.

Sofiya walks ahead of Olena and Anton.

She stops upon seeing a ridge in the river further ahead.

She goes to the river bank up ahead and studies the ridge. The water washes over the slippery rocks.

SOFIYA

We can cross here.

Olena slowly approaches, staring at the rocks and the wild river.

SOFIYA

I'll go first.

Sofiya prepares herself, fixing the rifle properly over her shoulder.

She carefully puts one foot in front of the other, crossing the river.

SOFIYA

It's okay.

One step in front of the other.

(CONTINUED)

Back on land, Anton and Olena wait. Anton looks to Olena. She smiles, but Anton is understandably distant now.

Halfway across, Sofiya looks back at them.

Olena motions for Anton to go next. Anton is hesitant.

OLENA
I'll be behind you.

Anton nervously steps out on the water. He struggles to find his balance on the rocks, and then he slowly begins to traverse the river.

Olena steps onto the rocks.

Sofiya reaches the other side and is relieved.

Anton is halfway across when he stumbles. He catches himself though.

Sofiya watches both of them.

Anton's feet - one slowly in front of the other. Anton is nervous, but a grin appears on his face as he finds his confidence.

Suddenly Olena falls into the water behind him. Her fall is silent, as she thumps her head on the rock going under.

SOFIYA
Olena!

Anton turns around to find Olena missing.

Sofiya runs - carefully albeit - onto the rocks --

SOFIYA
Olena!

But Olena is carried away --

Carried down the river in the darkness underneath.

He feet kick and her arms flailing. Air escapes her mouth as she rushes down the edge of the bank.

She then thumps against the river bank --

And then an arm reaches in to grab her. The arm slips from her - but then two arms reach in and pull her.

Pulled from the water and onto the opposite bank. A pair of strong male arms tries to revive her, and suddenly she coughs up a mouthful of water and gasps for breath.

(CONTINUED)

A man stands over her - MYKOLA, 40s, A DOUBLE BARREL SHOTGUN by his side.

Olena looks to the bank and sees Sofiya and Anton, having also made it successfully across, running in their direction.

Olena sits at a dinner table, opposite her sister. She is worse for wear, but will live.

Mykola is helping an elderly woman, MAMA, to put dishes of food on the table.

MYKOLA

My Mama, and my wife Vira.

The sisters greet their hosts.

Mykola places a dish before Anton, but not without staring him down.

A woman of similar age, VIRA, takes a seat next to Sofiya. Olena sits opposite her sister.

MAMA

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Vira isn't bowing her head like the others, instead her gaze firmly set on Anton.

MAMA

Amen.

SOFIYA

OLENA

Amen.

Amen.

They start to eat.

VIRA

Amen.

Sofiya passes a dish to Olena. Olena, still shaken, fills her plate and passes it to Vira.

Everyone is eating by now, but Anton has yet to fill his plate as the food is out of his reach.

As an act of goodwill, Olena stands up and brings Anton some food. She draws attention from the others, but she continues to help, before taking her seat again.

85 INT. BATHROOM - LATER 85

Sofiya takes off her clothes to reveal her body covered in marks from a tough life of farming.

86 MOMENTS LATER 86

Sofiya is sitting in the bath, washing her hair.

Her body is sensitive, and she carefully bathes herself. Her body is like the environment, once beautiful, now deteriorating amid a constant struggle to survive.

87 MOMENTS LATER 87

Sofiya is drying herself when she feels a sharp pain in her mid region. She clutches onto the sink for support.

The pain subsides after a moment.

88 INT. KITCHEN - LATER 88

Sofiya explores Mama's home. She is looking at a picture of VIRA AS A YOUNG WOMAN with her family.

Vira enters and Sofiya puts down the picture of the family again. Sofiya cuts an embarrassed smile.

VIRA

Why are you here?

SOFIYA

We're looking for some people.

VIRA

Why are you with that boy? You know who he is. What he does.

Sofiya nods.

SOFIYA

He's helping us to retrieve a horse that was stolen from me.

VIRA

It must be very valuable, if you are venturing out this far.

SOFIYA

It's priceless.

VIRA

A unicorn.

(CONTINUED)

Sofiya doesn't humour the reference --

SOFIYA

We're going to Yaniv. There's a camp there.

VIRA

You're in luck. Yaniv isn't far.

SOFIYA

Then you might be able to help us.

Vira picks up a CAT that is wandering about and leaves the room.

VIRA

You don't look like farmers.

She returns empty handed.

VIRA

But tomorrow we will take you to your unicorn.

Olena is lying in bed. She takes the medallion from her pocket and leaves it on the dresser before getting comfortable.

The darkness is penetrated by a beam of ionising radiation that blasts into the night sky far off in the distance, and followed by a FAINT BOOM. Darkness returns again.

A FLOCK OF BIRDS race overhead to escape the sound.

The young girl peers out the window to see what the commotion is. She curiously studies the birds exodus from the region.

By the lake she sees her grandmother arguing with a MAN.

The man behaving aggressively towards the elderly woman.

MAN

She's coming with me. She's not
yours to raise --

BABUSHKA

I'm the only one raising those
girls.

MAN

I'm putting her to work. She's of
age, so if you try and stop me,
I'll fucking burn this house to
the ground.

BABUSHKA

You want to separate those girls?
You monster -- you're poison for
those children!

The man sees the child peering out the window, as he
returns to his car, where a YOUNG SOFIYA sits looking out
at her distressed grandmother.

The girl climbs out of bed --

And she emerges --

YOUNG GIRL

Babushka!

The woman holds her composure, recovering from the
confrontation moments earlier.

GRANDMOTHER

Go back to bed child.

She looks to the car as it drives away.

The girl is so distracted it takes her a moment to
recognize that her grandmother isn't herself.

The stallion in the nearby pen is agitated, as though
aware of something that only the wildlife can sense.

The Babushka goes to calm her --

YOUNG GIRL

What's happening?

But the elderly woman can only muster enough strength to
pet the animal a few times before she collapses.

The girl stares at her grandmother lying motionless next
to the pen.

The child is frozen.

93 EXT. YANIV, OUTSKIRTS - MORNING - THE PRESENT

93

A house recently gutted by fire.

A MASS GRAVE nearby. Horses and other livestock, blackened and smoldering.

Sofiya is covering her face with a scarf to block out the smell of the seared flesh. Mama keeps her distance.

SOFIYA

I don't understand --

MAMA

This is what you came for.

Sofiya turns to Mama. An overwhelming sense of loss on her face.

94 EXT. MAMA'S FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

94

Olena is sitting by the back porch and watching Vira working in the field.

VIRA

Olena.

Olena perks up as Vira motions for her to come join her.

Olena stands up and ventures into the field.

VIRA

Here --

She gives Olena a rake.

VIRA

You can make yourself useful.

Olena takes the rake and gets to work on the field with Vira.

Olena watches Vira, noticing her dedication to the land.

OLENA

Why do you stay here?

VIRA

This is where I was born.

OLENA

How do you survive here?

VIRA

'Survival' means finding a way.

(CONTINUED)

VIRA

You don't wish to stay?

OLENA

This isn't my home.

VIRA

Where is your home?

OLENA

In the city.

Vira stops for a moment --

OLENA

We moved to the farm after my mother died.

VIRA

What about your father?

OLENA

Sofiya told me he died working to fight the fire. But I know she's lying.

VIRA

Why would she lie about something like that?

OLENA

To keep the truth from me.

Vira nods --

VIRA

Seems to me like she's protecting you.

Olena doesn't understand.

Suddenly there is A DISTURBANCE near the house.

Olena and Vira drop what they are doing and go to investigate.

They arrive to find Anton and Mykola fighting.

VIRA

Mykola, what are you doing?

Mykola pulls himself to his feet --

Olena rushes to Anton to help him.

(CONTINUED)

OLENA

What happened?

ANTON

Ask him --

MYKOLA

I don't trust him Vira. He's a Koorva.

MYKOLA

Do you know what a Koorva is?
Someone who'll do anything to get
what they want.

ANTON

Peederus!

Mykola goes for him again --

OLENA

Stop --

Mykola restrains himself.

Olena sees Sofiya arrive back at the farm again.

Sofiya doesn't even look to the chaos outside as she
enters the house.

Mama approaches --

MAMA

Mykola?

MYKOLA

(Olena)

You're going to leave and take
this boy with you.

Mykola spits on the ground and leaves.

Olena tries to console Anton but he shrugs her off
aggressively.

OLENA

It's okay --

She tries again but he is even more aggressive in batting
away her arm --

Olena realises she will not get through to him.

96 INT. MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER 96

More than half a dozen VILLAGERS are sitting in the room with Sofiya Mykola, Mama and Vira.

MYKOLA

They arrived in trucks. Dozens of them. With horses and cattle. But mostly horses.

MAMA

Our livestock started to disappear soon after. The police were telling us there was nothing they could they do. We could hear the animals across the plain, and the police were telling us to move away.

97 EXT. MAMA'S FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 97

Peering through the rifle scope, Olena sees the gutted farmhouse, and nearby, the smoking pyre of carcasses.

She notices Anton trying to clean the blood from his face through the bathroom window.

98 INT. MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 98

VILLAGER #3

It was worse by night. The animals are easier to kill at night.

VILLAGER #4

You've never heard sounds like that.

MYKOLA

We waited until they went out on a raid and we burned the place down.

VILLAGER #4

And killed those two boys --

The group erupt in debate --

MYKOLA

We will do what we must. We are protecting our homes.

VILLAGER #4

And what happens when they send more? Two poachers. Two of twenty, that we know of. And how many more in waiting?

(CONTINUED)

MAMA

We destroyed our livestock. We have nothing of value for them. If they come back we will show them the same mercy we showed their friends. They will know we too are capable of violence and slaughter.

Some of the other villagers show signs of disapproval.

MAMA

There can be no mercy.

MYKOLA

What of the Koorva?

They look to Sofiya. Sofiya looks to Mama, as to the faith of Anton --

MAMA

Starvation turns us into monsters.

Sofiya grows uneasy --

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Olena enters the bathroom.

Olena sits with Anton by the sink as she tries to clean the cuts on his face from the fight earlier.

She checks his stomach wound. He refuses to let her see it.

Instead, she gently dabs a wet cloth on his cuts. He tries not to make eye contact.

INT. MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Olena is sleeping, when Sofiya enters and wakes her --

SOFIYA

Olena, wake up.

Olena stirs and wakes.

OLENA

What's the matter?

SOFIYA

Pack your things. We're leaving.

Olena doesn't understand. She looks to the window - still dark.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

100

OLENA

What's wrong?

SOFIYA

Where's Anton?

101 EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

101

Anton, sleeping on the floor of the barn, is woken by a sound.

He is suddenly surrounded by three men from the village - including Mykola.

He goes to run, but is immediately stopped and held captive.

102 EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

102

Anton is forcefully dragged by two of the men across the field. Flashlights are their only guide in the darkness as they navigated through the tall grass.

MYKOLA

If you scream I'll cut off your balls.

Anton is stunned into silence --

MYKOLA

You're going to wish you were never born.

Then there is the brief SOUND of FEET SPRINTING --

And before anyone can react, Sofiya is behind one of the men, using her rifle to knock him on the back of his head.

The man falls and she disarms him, giving the gun to Olena who is now with her.

SOFIYA

Olena, keep your sights on him --

Olena nervously points the gun at the second of the three men. The man, clearly out of his depth, drops his gun and backs away.

Sofiya sets her sights on Mykola --

SOFIYA

Olena, take his gun --

Olena looks to her sister --

(CONTINUED)

SOFIYA

Pick it up --

Olena hesitantly picks up the other gun and keeps her aim on the man.

MYKOLA

What are you doing?

SOFIYA

Let him go --

Mykola stands behind Anton - Sofiya holds her aim.

SOFIYA

(to the men)

You -- run into the darkness.

The men look to Mykola --

SOFIYA

Now --

She switches her aim to one of the men. He flinches.

SOFIYA

Run. And don't stop --

The men flee in different directions.

Both sisters now turn their aim to Mykola.

Mykola steps back, letting Anton free to step forward towards Olena.

SOFIYA

Olena, go with Anton --

Olena throws the gun away from her as though she was repulsed by it.

She looks to her sister --

SOFIYA

Go --

Olena picks up the flashlight and they flee into the darkness.

Sofiya keeps one eye on Mykola, and one on the dancing lights growing further away in the dark.

Sofiya then focuses all her attention on Mykola. Her eyes are piercing --

And then she vanishes into the darkness as well.

103 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN 103

Olena is struggling to get water from an old pump. Then she has success, and water pours from the spout.

Sofiya and Anton are nearby, pointing to a place beyond the forest.

ANTON

I've heard stories of poachers
hiding out in the hills across the
river. If they're still in the
area, that's where you'll find
them.

Olena routes for the Geiger counter from her bag and scans the water. The reading is low. She takes a taste of the water. She takes another mouthful.

104 LATER 104

The three are eating the remains of their supplies, and drinking the water.

Sofiya stands up and picks up the rifle.

SOFIYA

Come with me.

Olena is puzzled.

105 MOMENTS LATER 105

Olena is peering through the rifle scope with Sofiya by her side.

Anton is exploring nearby.

OLENA

I can't see anything.

SOFIYA

It's not fitted for you.

Sofiya pops the chamber, and removes the magazine.

SOFIYA

First make sure it's safe.

She returns the gun to Olena.

SOFIYA

Close your eyes --

Olena is puzzled --

(CONTINUED)

SOFIYA

Close your eyes.

SOFIYA

Take the gun --

Olena takes the rifle.

SOFIYA

Now put it up to your shoulder as
if you were looking through it.
Keep your eyes closed.

Olena has to resist opening her eyes. She carefully puts
the rifle stock to her shoulder --

SOFIYA

Let your head rest comfortably on
the rifle.

SOFIYA

Are you comfortable?

Olena confirms --

SOFIYA

Okay, open your eyes.

Olena opens her eyes --

SOFIYA

What do you see?

Olena struggles to see through the scope --

Sofiya takes the rifle back and removes a leather wrap
around the stock.

SOFIYA

Close your eyes again --

Olena repeats the process, and after resting her head on
the stock comfortably, opens her eyes.

She peers through the scope, and she smiles.

SOFIYA

Better?

The smile says everything --

SOFIYA

Good.

Olena finds a bird in the distance and pulls the trigger.
Nothing happens.

(CONTINUED)

But Sofiya slowly and carefully slides a round into the chamber. Olena grows more serious as she realises the power in her hands.

Sofiya looks out into the world.

SOFIYA

When you're ready.

Olena lines up the target. The bird in sight.

She fires -- AN ECHO THROUGHOUT THE FOREST. The bird flies away.

Olena is disappointed.

SOFIYA

Did you get a feel for it?

Olena nods.

ANTON (O.S.)

Olena --

They look in the direction of Anton's voice --

ANTON (O.S.)

Sofiya, come see this.

They go to Anton and look out across the overlook to see AN OLD AND DECAYING NUCLEAR REACTOR.

But not just the reactor - in the foreground of the vista, a HERD OF PRZEWALSKIS (sheh-vall-skee) galloping across the plains.

The animals move as one. The last of their kind, and the three watch on as though tomorrow they could be extinct. A truly once in a lifetime sight.

Then, the animals scatter as TWO POACHERS invade the animal's territory, firing their rifles.

Some of the horses fall, some struggle to escape. Most are lucky to evade capture.

The men, two of the three poachers in the photograph that Vitaliy showed her -- The BEARDED man, and the BALD man -- go to claim their prizes.

Sofiya is trying to mask her anger, but Olena is visibly sickened. Anton's guilt is evident.

106 EXT. THE LAKEHOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 106

The young girl is desperately trying to revive the elderly woman.

YOUNG GIRL

Babushka! Wake up! Please wake up!

But the woman is unresponsive. She tries moving the woman, but she can't.

She goes to the stallion --

YOUNG GIRL

C'mon girl --

She leads the horse from the pen, and remembering her training, she struggles to mount the horse.

YOUNG GIRL

Go --

The horse carries the girl across the landscape with great speed.

A HELICOPTER FLIES overhead, but her focus is on the path ahead. The horse charges on.

107 EXT. DYING FOREST - THE PRESENT 107

Olena is stealing glances of the reactor on the horizon as they cross through the lake --

Sofiya is braving the pain that returns in her stomach.

108 EXT. RAILROAD - LATER 108

They step off the overgrown terrain and onto an abandoned railroad that seems to extend on forever.

109 EXT. CITY - LATER 109

A city like any other. The abandoned buildings suggest it was home to over 50,000 people. Today, it is lifeless.

110 INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS 110

Light snowfall outside.

Sofiya and Olena looking out at the city. The cold penetrates the building - the windows having fallen outwards years before.

(CONTINUED)

Sofiya is subtle in her attempt to hide the pain --

OLENA

How long have you been suffering
with this?

Sofiya looks to her sister --

OLENA

Do you think I'm stupid?

SOFIYA

I'm fine. I'll be fine.

SOFIYA

We shouldn't stay here longer than
we need to.

She goes for her bag --

SOFIYA

Anton, we're leaving --

She looks to Anton who is standing by one of the windows.

SOFIYA

Anton?

And then Anton climbs out and jumps down --

SOFIYA

Anton --

Anton lands badly on his leg, but avoids injury. He pulls himself to his feet, as Olena and Sofiya come to the window to see him.

SOFIYA

Anton --

Anton looks up at the sisters, before turning and running away as fast as his legs will carry him.

Sofiya follows him, landing better than he did.

OLENA

Sofiya --

Sofiya gives chase --

112 EXT. CITY - MOMENTS LATER 112

Sofiya turns a corner and stops running to find that Anton has disappeared.

She HEARS a DISTURBANCE in a nearby building and investigates --

113 INT. ABANDONED BUILDING #2 - MOMENTS LATER 113

She enters cautiously --

SOFIYA

Anton?

SOFIYA

Anton, come out and we'll --

Suddenly she is hit with another striking pain in her stomach. Almost like going into labour. Sofiya collapses to her knees, barely able to breathe.

Anton emerges from the shadows and observes the immobilised woman before him.

SOFIYA

Please --

She reaches for help.

But Anton is hesitant.

Sofiya clinging on for precious life.

Anton stepping backwards.

ANTON

I'm sorry --

He flees the area.

Sofiya struggles to find strength, when a shadow comes over her - Olena arriving to give help.

OLENA

Sofiya! Oh God --

114 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 114

Olena pushes open the door to an abandoned apartment and helps Sofiya inside.

Olena takes a chair from the kitchen table and positions it for Sofiya to sit down.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

114

OLENA
I'll have a look around.

115 INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

115

Olena investigates a bedroom, finding a blanket covered in a thick dust. She lifts it off the bed to reveal clean bedsheets underneath.

She strips the bed, removing the clean sheets, when she HEARS a THUMP IN THE NEXT ROOM.

116 INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

116

Olena emerges from the bedroom to find Sofiya collapsed on the ground next to the table.

OLENA
Sofiya?

She hurries to her sister --

Blood trickles from Sofiya's head - she is unconscious.

OLENA
Wake up --

She slaps her sister to wake her up, but to no avail.

Olena drags Sofiya into --

117 INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

117

And desperately struggles to prop Sofiya on to the bed.

Olena is exhausted as she sits down on the ground to catch her breath.

118 NIGHT

118

Sofiya is resting comfortably, covered in sheets, as Olena carefully bandages the head wound.

She slowly and carefully cuts the bandage, and secures it in place.

Sofiya tidies and then sits on the chair next to the bed, watching Sofiya sleep. A tear rolls down her face, but she wipes it away aggressively. She settles in for the long haul.

119 LATER

119

VOICES AND FLICKERS IN THE NIGHT OUTSIDE.

Olena comes to the window and cautiously peers out.

Lanterns reveal the presence of SEVERAL PEOPLE.

Olena reacts suddenly and methodically, dimming the light in the room and shutting the curtains.

She returns to her sister --

OLENA
(quietly)
Sofiya?

Olena tries to wake her sister but she won't give.

Olena returns to the window.

The figures are still outside, drawing ever nearer.

She takes the rifle, loads it and goes to the bed.

OLENA
I'll be back.

Olena leaves the apartment.

120 EXT. COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

120

She emerges from the side entrance of the building, and onto an empty courtyard, where she can HEAR VOICES OF MEN NEARBY.

She carefully negotiates her way around the perimeter of the courtyard, and takes cover behind a crumbling memorial structure.

She peers out and identifies A DOZEN MEN.

Through the scope of the rifle she sees one of them motioning to the apartment.

The men approach the building.

She loads a round into the chamber, and following her sister's instructions, takes aim towards the men at the building.

She is careful. Does not rush. Aims slightly above their heads --

She pulls the trigger. A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT. The men duck and take cover.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

120

Olena struggles to pop the shell from the rifle, not as efficiently as her sister might. She nervously places another round in the gun. Suddenly A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT over her head as one of the men tries to return fire. Olena squirms.

ANOTHER GUNSHOT, and Olena runs into a nearby building.

121 INT. EMPTY BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

121

Olena runs through another building towards the back entrance, but the door won't open.

She tries desperately, as lanterns approach in the darkness outside.

Olena takes cover behind a pillar and readies her gun.

The SOUND of VOICES GROWING CLOSER.

Olena peers out as the men come into view. She takes aim, hands trembling --

She raises the rifle to her shoulder for stability --

Suddenly a hand from behind takes the rifle from her --

OLENA

Get off me --

The man struggles to hold her as she screams and kicks.

The others enter the building. He tosses the rifle to the other strangers.

Olena screams and shouts as loudly as she can --

122 EXT. SOFIYA'S FARM - DAWN - FLASHBACK

122

The young girl dismounts from the horse upon arriving at the farm.

The young girl, running towards the house can be heard to shout --

YOUNG GIRL

Sofiya! Sofiya!

But there is no one around except the MUFFLED SOUND of a RADIO inside.

123 INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 123

RADIO

The armed forces are taking necessary steps to combat this crisis. Nevertheless, with the view to keep people as safe and healthy as possible, the children being top priority, we need to temporarily evacuate the region.

She enters the house --

YOUNG GIRL

Sofiya!

But the house is empty.

The girl sees a TRUCK arriving at the gate of the farm.

TWO SOLDIERS step out and approach the house.

The girl goes to the door --

124 EXT. THE FARM - CONTINUOUS 124

The girl goes to meet the men --

But she sees a FAMILY in a nearby farm being dragged away by another group of SOLDIERS against their will.

The girl grows concerned, and doubles back into the house. The two soldiers follow --

125 INT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 125

The girl backs away from the door as they approach. She runs into the back --

126 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 126

She tries to open the window and climb out --

127 EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 127

The girl lands in the grass outside the house.

She is suddenly grabbed by one of the soldiers.

YOUNG GIRL

Let me go! I need your help --

The girl is dragged towards the truck --

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG GIRL

Please help me, my Babushka --

One of the locals in the back of the truck can be seen fleeing into the adjacent fields --

SOLDIER

Stop!

Taking advantage of the distracted soldier, the girl escapes and runs back towards the house.

The soldiers tend to the other fleeing villagers --

The girl hides in the grass and watches as soldiers catch the locals and force them back into the truck.

Olena is sitting with KIO, 40s, a mysterious man, as he prepares supper over a portable stove.

She watches a man climbing out of the back of a truck, before turning her attention to Kio again.

He is busy stirring ingredients into the meal.

KIO

Are you hungry?

OLENA

What do you want with me?

Kio concentrates on preparing supper instead.

KIO

One of our people is missing. A girl, like you.

KIO

The police told us there was a woman on the loose with a rifle, just like this one.

He picks up the rifle. Puts it back again.

KIO

But she was older than you from what I gathered. Do you know anything about that? They're offering a reward apparently.

Olena processes the situation --

KIO

You're safe here.

(CONTINUED)

He gives her a plate of simple food for supper --
She starts eating.

KIO
So where did you learn to shoot?

KIO
I know she's with you. We saw you
enter the city.

Olena is protective of the rifle.

KIO
Is she watching us right now? Does
she have another rifle? I'd like
to know if my men are walking into
a trap.

OLENA
She's sick.

KIO
Maybe we can help? Tell us where
she is?

But Olena will not be so easily swayed --

KIO
Suit yourself.

KIO
Like I said, we're looking for a
missing girl. We're not from here,
and we don't care about rewards.

Kio stands up and conducts a private conversation with A
COLLEAGUE--

OLENA
In the apartment --

Kio looks to her. Olena turns and points upwards to the
apartment building.

OLENA
She's in the apartment.

Kio motions for one of his men to investigate.

He returns to her. Face to face --

KIO
What's your name?

129 INT. TRUCK - NIGHT 129

An old truck.

Kio and his men are inside, with Sofiya lying in the back with her sister.

Unbeknownst to Olena, there is a bullet hole in the rear of the truck.

130 EXT. THE BORDER - DAWN 130

As the sun rises, Olena notices ROADSIGN that reads "AIR IS SAFE".

The exclusion zone grows further away in the distance.

131 EXT. ORPHANAGE - MOMENTS LATER 131

The truck arrives outside a large building, withered by time, and overgrown.

Olena gets out of the truck with the other men and looks at the building. She sees CHILDREN in the windows peering out.

Sofiya is taken by stretcher to the entrance, as a FEMALE DOCTOR comes to her aid. Olena goes to her, but is held back by Kio.

She looks to Kio, but Kio motions for her to be taken away.

OLENA

Where are you taking her? Let go
of me --

Olena watches as she is separated from her sister.

132 INT. CANTEEN - MOMENTS LATER 132

Kio escorts Olena into a giant empty canteen area. Worn posters for food groups and hygiene awareness parade the walls.

Kio welcomes her to a table --

Olena reluctantly goes and sits.

OLENA

I want to see her.

KIO

You will. I promise.

(CONTINUED)

A man enters --

MAN #2

Kio --

Kio leaves, and Olena stands up again and explores the room.

She tries a large double door but it is locked. She tries to unlock the bolt --

When suddenly SEVERAL DOZEN CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS flood into the room from the opposite entrance.

They are laughing and playing, some in groups, some alone, all gathering for breakfast.

Olena watches with bewilderment. Everyone is finding a seat, when Kio returns with OTHER STAFF to serve breakfast to the children.

Kio motions politely for her to sit again.

Olena reluctantly goes and sits with the other children. They are curious about her, but mostly keep to themselves.

Olena is slow to eat.

One child is having trouble pouring a glass of juice so she helps him with the cup. Her smile to the child is a rare sign of sincerity.

The staff at the orphanage are gathering the empty plates and glasses. Olena has cleared her plate by now.

FEMALE TEACHER

Today's game is called 'The Crystal Ball'. I want you all to pretend you have a crystal ball in your hands, and I want you to ask the crystal ball what you are going to be doing fifteen years from now. Okay?

A teacher is at each table, and Kio is at a neighbouring table to Olena.

KIO

Olena, would you like to take part?

Olena accepts and becomes the substitute teacher for this table.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

OLENA
Who wants to begin?

She listens to the children as they shout over one another trying to impress the new visitor. Olena enjoys her time with them --

134 INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

134

Olena follows Kio as he leads her down one of the many corridors. She is curious about the orphanage.

KIO
The children seem to really like you.

OLENA
How is my sister?

KIO
She's responding to medication.
You can see her shortly. For now I thought you might want to get some rest. You must be exhausted.

He leads her to a --

135 INT. DORMATORY - CONTINUOUS

135

Olena enters and finds two single beds in an otherwise very bare room.

An orphan girl, ANNA, 17, is keeping busy inside.

KIO
Anna, this is Olena. She'll be staying here for the night. Make her welcome.

Anna smiles politely --

KIO
I'll be back in a moment.

ANNA
You can use that bed. It belongs to Lilia, but she's not coming back.

OLENA
Is she the girl who ran away?

ANNA
Yes. People run away from here all the time.

(CONTINUED)

OLENA

Why would they do that?

ANNA

To go home. A lot of people here have families, but they don't realise their families don't want them.

OLENA

That's terrible. Is that what Lilia did?

ANNA

She just wanted to leave.

Olena scans the barren room.

ANNA

We tell the kids she went into the hills.

Anna is gazing out the window to the woods.

ANNA

The kids are afraid of the hills. They try to scare the children so they don't run away.

OLENA

What's in the hills?

ANNA

The hills are where the thieves live.

Olena looks to the hills.

OLENA

The weather's turning.

Kio returns with a change of clothes and some toiletries.

KIO

This should get you through the night.

Olena snaps back to reality.

The young girl, OLENA AS A CHILD, dismounts from the horse at the cottage and runs with all her strength.

She finds the Babushka missing, no longer where she was.

The girl is out of breath.

Young Sofiya touches her shoulder and Olena turns around in shock.

YOUNG GIRL

I did everything I could Sofiya. I tried so hard.

Her sister comforts her.

Sofiya turns her to the lakehouse.

Olena can see her Babushka lying on the table inside through the window.

She cries.

The stallion approaches.

Sofiya is asleep, and dressed in a gown. The floor is quiet.

Olena joins her at the bedside.

OLENA

They're treating me well here.

Looking to Sofiya as if expecting a response.

OLENA

Vitaliy is on the way. He's going to take us home.

Olena isn't proud, as though she's failed --

OLENA

It's finished.

OLENA

Say something.

OLENA

Please say something. I need my sister Sofiya. You spent so many years trying to be my friend, but I didn't need a friend. I needed a sister.

OLENA

You were supposed to give me something. And I don't know what it is, but I need something from you.

137 CONTINUED:

137

OLENA

Please say something.

She wipes her tears.

A man comes to the door. It is Vitaliy, dressed in full police attire.

138 INT. CANTEEN - LATER

138

Vitaliy sits with Olena.

VITALIY

People are talking about you back home.

Olena grins and wipes the remainder of her tears --

OLENA

What are they saying?

VITALIY

They're quietly optimistic.

Olena is proud of herself --

VITALIY

Don't delude yourself. That was a very stupid thing you did.

Olena's moment is over.

OLENA

How did you find us?

VITALIY

I wasn't looking for you.

VITALIY

Your sister walked into a police station with a gun - set a criminal free - if I was looking for her she'd be in a jail cell right now, instead of this place.

Neither speak for a moment --

OLENA

What happens now?

VITALIY

I take you home. Both of you. As soon as Sofiya's well enough to travel.

(CONTINUED)

OLENA

What's going to happen to her?

VITALIY

Nothing. You just go home.

VITALIY

I was raised in a place like this.
You spend every second thinking
about getting out, but you have
nowhere to go.

OLENA

What about the stallion?

VITALIY

I've spent the last two days
searching for a missing girl. They
know and I know, she's never going
to be found.

Vitaliy is feeling like a shell of a police officer now.

VITALIY

I've been thinking, maybe it's
better I don't find her. She
probably doesn't want to be found
anyway. Probably just wants to
leave and go somewhere better.

Olena listens to his theorising.

VITALIY

You're a smart girl Olena. Why
don't you make a change?

Vitaliy is by himself finishing a cigarette.

Kio enters.

KIO

Is it true? Are they really
looking for a horse?

Vitaliy looks to Kio, trying to figure him out.

Vitaliy outs the cigarette and stands up to Kio.

VITALIY

You shouldn't eavesdrop.

Kio's eyes drift to --

Olena returning to collect her bag from the table.

139 CONTINUED: 139

The men look to her - she has heard enough.

140 INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER 140

Olena turns the corner and picks up speed as she returns to her room --

Closing the door behind her.

141 INT. DORMATORY - THE NEXT MORNING 141

A knocking on the door.

VITALIY (O.S.)

Olena?

Olena and Anna are not there.

142 EXT. THE HILLS - MORNING 142

Olena and Anna traverse the wooded flats to a clearing.

OLENA IS WEARING HER SISTER'S COAT NOW, with the rifle strapped on her back.

They stop at a clearing and look to the hills where a plume of smoke trickles up into the sky.

ANNA

There --

Olena studies the landscape.

OLENA

Thank you.

She hugs Anna, and the orphan returns the way she came.

Olena watches as she disappears out of view. Olena's smile fades and she moves towards the hills with determination and grit.

143 LATER 143

Olena has been walking for ages.

The snow is heavier in this part of the wilderness, and Olena struggles to keep up the necessary strength to continue.

Then she reaches the perimeter of a once abandoned farm, like the dozens she has encountered on her journey. But this one is inhabited once more.

144 EXT. POACHER'S DEN - DAY

144

Olena scans the camp with the rifle scope to find A HALF DOZEN MEN going about their business within the otherwise seemingly regular farm.

One poacher, the large man, BUILT LIKE A TANK, from the photograph shown to Sofiya, is escorting A TEAM OF HORSES from a neighbouring barn to the rear of the building where they are locked in a keep.

The poacher then proceeds to execute every one of them in succession by gunshot. The horses fall to their feet one by one, each becoming more panicked as their inevitable death approaches.

Olena cannot fathom the horror she has just witnessed.

Wasting little time, she readies herself and approaches the farm with caution.

Crossing a barbed fence, she arrives at a --

145 INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

145

Inside the barn, Olena encounters almost FIFTY HORSES OF DIFFERENT BREEDS AND AGES, huddled together in pens.

Olena drapes the rifle over her shoulder and starts hurriedly searching for the mare.

Olena HEARS A POACHER entering, and so she enters a pen and crouches down behind several horses.

The large man collects more animals for slaughter, and Olena is forced into another nearby pen to remain undetected.

Then, as the poacher leaves again, she sees A FEMALE STALLION.

It's brown coat shimmers in the rain and the moonlight. Its perfect physique makes it an anomaly in these parts. Flawless, like *Kino's pearl*.

She emerges from the pen and goes to the mare, studying the animal --

The animals responds to her. Olena cannot believe her eyes.

OLENA

It's me girl.

Utter disbelief as Olena studies to almost mythical creature. The Unicorn.

(CONTINUED)

The VOICES OF MEN. Olena reacts --

OLENA

Let's get out of here.

She leaves for a moment and searches...

Finding a length of rope, Olena fashions a crude harness and drapes it over the mare..

OLENA

C'mon girl --

She leads the mare, but the mare is stubborn.

OLENA

Here --

Tugging on the rope, the horse finally moves.

She leads the stallion to the barn exit when she encounters Anton in the opposite pen.

Anton stops what he is doing as he recognises her. She is as surprised as he is.

Olena grows tense. Anton is not far from the others. She doesn't like how he is reacting - in that he *isn't* reacting at all.

Olena takes the gun from her shoulder and makes it ready. Anton looks to the gun and then to her. Olena doesn't say anything, but only because her eyes say enough.

She makes a point to pop a round in the chamber. Just like he taught her.

Olena takes the first step forward, with the horse in tow, as they exit the barn.

She scans the environment quickly, and satisfied that the coast is clear, she retreats to the far side of the farm, where it is quieter.

Anton watches as she goes to a gate.

LARGE POACHER (O.S.)

What are you looking at?

LARGE POACHER

Get back to work.

Olena looks back to find Anton being scolded by the large poacher. A boy being bullied by men.

(CONTINUED)

- 146 CONTINUED: 146
- Anton obeys, stealing another glance at Olena as she disappears.
- 147 EXT. THE HILLS - LATER 147
- Olena is running with the horse through the woods to gain distance. The rifle is draped over her shoulder, and she is quite nimble as she side steps obstacles and jumps over fallen branches and other obstructions - the stallion following like their training as youths.
- 148 MOMENTS LATER 148
- Olena stops and catches her breath. She looks around to find her bearings. She is truly exhausted, clutching her knees as she tries to breathe.
- Olena tries to mount the horse, but the horse is resistant.
- She tries again, but the horse once again refuses to stay still, as though the trust has been broken.
- Olena gives up trying and continues on foot.
- 149 LATER 149
- Now Olena is walking, leading the stallion through heavy woodland that is seemingly unfamiliar.
- She comes across a set of footprints in the snow.
- And then a set of animal prints next to it.
- She is lost.
- 150 LATER 150
- Deeper again into the forest.
- Now she isn't even walking anymore. She looks around, unsure of what direction to take in this seemingly never ending forest.
- It is getting dark.
- 151 NIGHT 151
- Olena is shivering, wrapped in her sister's coat, and lying on a flat log from a fallen trunk.
- She hugs the coat, even tighter, and tries to sleep.

(CONTINUED)

151 CONTINUED:

151

The stallion is hitched to a nearby tree. She nickers, and Olena instinctively goes to check on her.

She gets up and tightens the rope on the tree to make doubly sure.

The HOWLING from DOGS in the distance.

Olena is fearful. The mare grows anxious and Olena tries to calm her.

Olena lies down again, the rifle resting next to her.

The howling continues, but she covers her ears.

152 THE NEXT MORNING

152

The horse will not move for her. It is beyond stubbornness. Something else keeps her here.

OLENA

Please. We need to keep moving.

The horse won't budge.

She turns and sees a DOG approaching slowly in the woods.

It keeps a healthy distance, but at the same time feels confident enough to slowly approach.

Olena carefully takes the gun from her shoulder. She then raises the gun to her shoulder, ready to fire, when a SNAP nearby causes the dog to leave again.

Olena lowers the rifle, somewhat relieved, but looks around to see if she can identify the sound. THE SOUND OF THE FOREST and the nothingness of the trees.

Then the faint impression of movement. THREE MEN prowling in the distance - the bearded poacher, the bald poacher, and a third man.

Olena's expression turns to one of fear and urgency, as she takes the horse by the reigns and leads it away.

Then a GUNSHOT echoes, and a chunk of bark in a nearby tree explodes out.

The horse is terrified, breaks free from Olena's grip, and flees deeper into the woods.

Olena tries to chase after it, but another gunshot stops her.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

152

Olena cowers behind a tree trunk, and attempts to get a bearing on the poachers. She takes aim with her rifle and nervously fires off a shot. The men take cover.

Olena uses the opportunity to pursue the horse, which by now has gained significant distance.

153 EXT. HILLSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

153

Olena climbs down the side of a hill, keeping one eye on the horse in the distance.

The men appear at the ridge and begin firing at the horse.

Olena becomes afraid for the horse --

OLENA
Stop, you'll kill it.

Mounds of dirt exploding near the horse as the men attempt to shoot the horse.

Then one of the men falls to the ground, as a distinct gunshot rings out.

The men stop and see Olena, who is holding the smoking rifle near eye level. She lowers the gun, shocked by her actions.

The men lower their guns and proceed to help the man, who is now bleeding out on the ground.

Olena runs down the hill and towards the woods, where the horse has fled to.

154 EVENING

154

The snow is gone now, and the country somewhat familiar again.

Olena struggles to walk. She wipes tears from her eyes - distressed from the events earlier.

She HEARS the SOUND OF A HORSE CRYING OUT.

Olena goes to the sound, and pushes passed the clearing --

To find the stallion lying on one side, helpless.

Olena drops the rifle and goes to the animal, gently places her hands on the mare. The horse still breathes, but it is laboured.

She checks for signs of injury.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

154

She rests her ear on the animal to check for a heart.

She HEARS A SLOW HEARTBEAT.

And then a SECOND HEARTBEAT.

Olena lifts her head up again and looks to the horse who by now is having trouble keeping its eyes open.

She studies the animal, feeling down its side, when suddenly she sees MOVEMENT UNDER THE SKIN.

Olena stands up - stands back even.

OLENA

You're pregnant.

Looks at the animal, as it rests in a comfortable birthing position. Olena doesn't know whether to smile or not. She can't help but laugh.

OLENA

You're pregnant.

155 MOMENTS LATER

155

Olena gathers tall grass from nearby clearings --

She makes a bed for the animal, placing it under the mare's legs and head.

Stepping back, Olena looks at the animal as she begins to cry out.

It begins.

156 NIGHT

156

Olena is watching from nearby, as the mare's tail trashes about as she goes further and further into labour.

Olena gives the animal room, while keeping watch over the forest with the gun.

157 LATER

157

It begins to rain, and Olena does her best to wrap up warm, taking shelter under some trees.

The mare is left exposed to the elements, but Olena can do nothing but watch and listen to its cries.

The EYES OF DOGS in the darkness are visible. The HOWLING is deafening.

(CONTINUED)

Olena cocks the rifle and fires into the darkness. The animals flee.

The mare is startled by the gunfire. Olena drapes the gun over her shoulder and goes to help.

She gently touches the horse, and studies how far along the animal is. Olena is concerned.

Olena rests the rifle by the tree and takes the canteen. She pours the water over her hands, washing them as best she can.

Olena crouches down behind the horse, and nervously reaches into the animal.

OLENA

C'mon girl. I can feel it. You gotta push.

The horse just trashes. Olena reaches further with one arm. The horse is in pain. It cries. She feels inside, guided by instinct and everything she thinks she knows about life and death, and birth and anatomy.

The horse reacts and Olena becomes more focused, as though she can see the end.

Tugging, gently, but coaxing at the same time. In the darkness the foal is revealed by the reflection of moonlight and rainwater on the sac.

Relief from the horse, and relief from Olena. She falls back, wiping her face with her elbow, her arms covered in fluid.

She looks to the foal - it is not moving.

She gently tears the sac and peels it back to reveal the foal in all its perfection - still not moving.

Olena starts crying - a combination of exhaustion, relief, fear, and everything else she has gone through for this unexpected moment. And for the foal still and lifeless.

She sits in the rain. The forest is seemingly silent. Sleep could take her at any moment. Now only the mare, Olena, and the foal.

Then the foal stirs. It moves ever so slightly, and then the movements become that of waking.

Olena looks to the foal, wiping her tears with her forearm and elbows. She goes to the foal - helps it as much as she can. It is alive.

(CONTINUED)

- 157 CONTINUED: (2) 157
- She smiles - smiling turns to tears of joy.
- 158 MOMENTS LATER 158
- She lifts up the foal and carries it to its mother.
- It feeds, while Olena cleans her hands with the remaining water in the canteen.
- She takes the rifle, and sits near the mare and its foal, and stays vigilant.
- 159 DAWN 159
- Olena wakes from the first proper sleep she's had in a while.
- The mare is standing upright, the foal feeding from underneath.
- The forest is slightly different now, as Olena looks around. The weather is pleasant. It is still cold, and she wraps up, but she has survived the night.
- 160 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING 160
- A NURSE hurries into the room, as Sofiya tries to sit up in bed --
- SOFIYA
Olena! Where's Olena?
- NURSE
Stay still. Try and relax --
- SOFIYA
Olena -- I want to see her --
- NURSE
Everything's fine. Just relax --
- The nurse adjusts the medication in the drip, and Sofiya calms down again, before drifting back to sleep.
- 161 EXT. EXCLUSION ZONE, BORDER - DAY 161
- Olena emerges from the woods and arrives at a clearing.
- In the distance, the familiar sight of the exclusion zone border.
- She turns back --

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED:

161

Coming up behind, the mare and foal.

She turns her attention forward again - to home.

162 EXT. SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE - SOME TIME LATER

162

The foal is older now, but still a foal. Still in need of its mother.

The mare is pulling a plough, as Olena works the field.

In the distance, she notices a patrol car approaching, before turning into the farm.

Olena stops the horse and takes a much needed rest.

Vitaliy gets out of the car and waves to Olena, before being greeted by Sofiya at the door of the farmhouse.

SOFIYA IS WITH CHILD NOW.

SOFIYA

You don't have to keep visiting.

VITALIY

It's not over yet.

SOFIYA

I know.

VITALIY

How is she doing?

They watch Olena finishing her work.

SOFIYA

She's different.

Olena returns the animal to the stable.

VITALIY

They'll come back. We're keeping watch, but they'll be smarter this time. More careful.

Sofiya is already thinking about these problems ahead.

VITALIY

I'll be back tomorrow.

Waving goodbye to Olena, he gets in the car and pulls out again.

Olena comes towards the house.

(CONTINUED)

SOFIYA

The field is finally coming along.

Olena takes a much needed drink and studies the land.

SOFIYA

Can I make you something to eat?

OLENA

No.

Olena goes indoors.

A cool breeze forces Sofiya to wrap up.

She HEARS the horse nicker in the distance.

Sofiya turns back to see a LONE DOG crossing a nearby field.

SOFIYA

Olena --

Olena emerges, and sees the dog.

She takes the rifle from against the wall of the cottage -
-

And passing her sister entirely, marching out into the field.

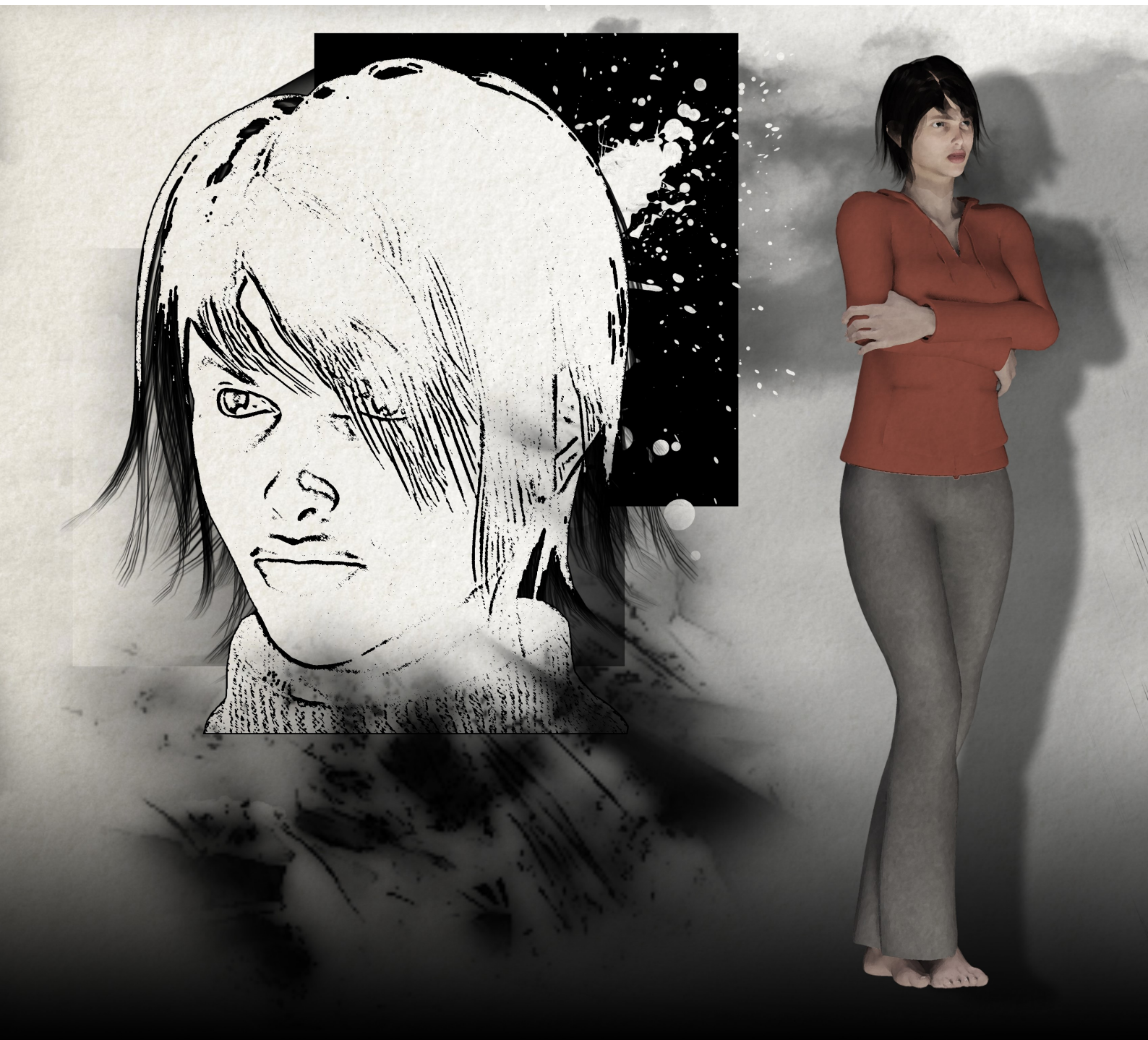
Sofiya watches as Olena goes to protect the farm.

THE END





Sofiya, 28



Olena, 18



Anton, 20s





...take shelter

AT THE CROSSING

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Credits

AT THE **CROSSING**

Written by

John Finnegan

Consultants

Dr. Jamie Sherry

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About the Author

John Finnegan is an award winning screenwriter and filmmaker. He has written for both film and games, and has had work produced in Ireland and the United States. John is also a lecturer in Screenwriting at Falmouth University, as well as a PhD candidate in screenwriting at Bangor University. His research is both practice and critical based, which explores the unseen contributions of screenwriters in film productions.

AT THE CROSSING



HOME IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Chapter 3:

Ironing out the creases: The writing and re-writing of *At the Crossing*

Introduction

As I wrote, I learned my own lessons. In my enquiry, I found the autobiographical traces affecting me. I wrote Marian and her island. I wrote Serena and gave her my own fascination with islands and I began to confront my own past loneliness and its association with those islands (Perry, cited in Barrett and Bolt 2010, 39).

Gaylene Perry suggests that the act of writing can be, as she terms, a “revealing” process (cited in Barrett and Bolt, 2010, 44). The writer can learn much about themselves, as well as their creative process in a practice-led mode of enquiry. In the above text, Perry is specifically discussing the ways that her creative writing techniques helped in the healing process of a traumatic event. While my practice is not related to this therapeutic mode of writing, it is grounded in a similar desire to understand my own creative process better. As a creative practitioner, I believe the relationship between creator and consumer is a strong one. I believe they are inherently linked. Every creator is a consumer of their own media, while consumers are activated to be creators, if even in their imaginations. Therefore, screenwriters must always keep their implied reader or spectator at the forefront of their mind when writing.

Since the earliest screenwriting manual publications dating back to 1911, there has been a continuous effort on the part of so-called ‘gurus’ to describe the consumption habits of the implied spectator of the film industry to the amateur screenwriter and to help the writer better understand his or her methodological approach to the craft. In recent decades, another collection of craft manuals, this time dealing with Campbell-ian mythology and the narratological aspects of cinema, has come about and these publications hinge on the author’s supposed knowledge of how audiences engage with a film, typically those of the Hollywood model.¹⁸ The common goal of these publications is to teach the struggling writer to engage both readers and spectators, by employing narrative devices in a script and by using a self-reflective practice-led mode of learning. Academic research into readers and audience response suggest that scholars are reluctant to incorporate industrial perceptions of writing for the implied reader into their research of audience and reader response studies. This divide in the perception of audiences, from a scholarly and industrial context, suggests a segregation of the

¹⁸ *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Campbell 1949), *Story* (McKee 1999) and *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Vogler 2007).

academy and the wider industry. The result of this divide is, according to Patrick Cattrysse, that “practitioners and theoreticians have missed opportunities to learn from each other” (2010, 84). More so, approaches to screenwriting in independent, specifically underground film productions, can differ considerably to the traditional methods of the Hollywood system. This can further complicate attempts by scholars to reconcile academic studies of the craft with industrial methods.

A method of practice-led research, concerned with the nature of practice and where the researcher situates themselves in an industrial setting, can bridge the divide between ‘the industry’ and academic studies. The practice-led component of this research is comprised of a short film, *Still Life*, which has already been discussed and dissected in previous chapters, and a feature length original academic screenplay, *At the Crossing*, which will be deconstructed in this chapter. However, in addition to the feature-length screenplay, the practice component of this research is also comprised of supporting development documentation, including a treatment, a writer’s statement, as well as a production schedule and a budget breakdown, so as to help understand the demands of writing ‘industry facing’ screenplays.

The practice-led research component of this thesis extends beyond the production documentation included with these chapters. In keeping with traditional screenwriting practice, I drew from no empirical audience data to inform the writing process; rather, I embraced a reflective approach to the practice, using systematic redrafting techniques and supported by critical enquiry. Much of the conclusions that are drawn from the act of writing are not self-evident and are taken from a self-reflective mode of learning. An example of this is the way that my professional experience of working with directors, cinematographers and actors informed my writing of *At the Crossing*. Understanding how actors, for one, deconstruct the implicit details, as well as the performative qualities of a script, is one way in which writers can play a more valuable role in enhancing the quality of the overall production, not just the quality of the story itself. Such an analysis can also reveal new insights into the status of the screenplay as a literary artefact and shed further light on the reading habits of screenplay consumers at various levels of cinema culture.

The chapter is concerned with the development of a feature-length screenplay, from its initial conception, until it arrives at a stage where it is deemed ready for a production. It will demonstrate the ways in which the writer’s creative process is informed by the sociological and industrial influences of cinema culture. Filmmaker Paul Thomas Anderson is quoted as saying, “Screenwriting is like ironing. You move forward a little bit and go back and smooth things out” (n.d.). Just as the act of screenwriting is as much about rewriting, this chapter will

document the writing and re-writing process of *At the Crossing*, from the screenplay's earliest stages of development, until my completion of the final draft. It begins with an investigation into the writing of an academic screenplay, free from the pressures of industry conventions and employing my preferred methods of story development. This includes posters, conceptual artwork, trailers and other media to help better communicate the screen idea to the implied reader. I will explore how these technologies were of benefit to me as a writer, serving as a thematic guide to assist in the development of treatments, outlines and other documentation later in this thesis.

The second section of this chapter draws on conventional narratological techniques in screenwriting literature, as well as the research of theorists working in the field of screenwriting and film studies, to investigate in what way my understanding of the implied reader of screenplays, as well as the implied spectator of films, informed my critique of the first draft of *At the Crossing*. By using the treatment document, I will demonstrate how this underexplored aspect of response studies can benefit the screenwriter.

This chapter will continue to analyse the development of *At the Crossing*, but will do so with an emphasis on, what I have referred to in this thesis as, 'industry facing screenwriting'. 'Industry facing screenwriting' relates to the stages of script development which are linked to the production of a film and the adaptation of the script into a visual medium. The development of a producible screenplay, something that caters to the resources of that particular production, is as much a part of the screenwriter's remit as the elaboration of the story itself. The screenwriter must consider budgetary and scheduling issues, as well as casting and previsualisation, to name a few. At this stage of the production, the implied reader becomes a real person that the screenwriter is expected to engage with during their tenure on the production. These readers are most commonly directors, actors, cinematographers and producers, but they can also include the editor, production design personnel, and in some instances, even marketing teams can have a say in how the story is developed or rewritten.

The logistical issues of producing a screen work, such as a film, can significantly affect the rewriting of a screenplay. Therefore, to simulate the demands of 'industry facing screenwriting', where my rewriting of *At the Crossing* is informed by industrial logistics, I deconstructed the most recent draft of the script to produce a production schedule of the film. This schedule then informed the creation of an industry standard production budget. It was these documents that played the most significant influence on the final redrafting stages and realised a more producible screenplay.

The next section, however, will position the reader at the earliest stage of the development of the script and investigate how the story of *At the Crossing* was conceived, while also demonstrating the multimodal techniques used in outlining the various aspects of the story, such as character and theme.

The Development of *At the Crossing*

Each artist began to explore his individual response, and collectively, we began to answer, with our words and art. Out of our brainstorming sessions emerged visual imagery of where we might want to go and what it would look like when we got there. We were not merely illustrating scenes that already existed: we were initiating storytelling concepts through the visual images themselves.

– Rick Carter, co-production designer, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (ilm.com n.d.)

The development of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (Abrams 2015) began with what production designer Rick Carter calls “guided imagery” (cited in Szostak & Lucasfilm Ltd., 2015). This guided imagery encompassed a collection of conceptual pieces of art designed to inspire the practitioners of the film production, including the screenwriters. Carter describes ‘guided imagery’ as “often purely symbolic, with little to no connection with the developing plot of the film, but the art can spark other ideas or stand as thematic milestones for the ongoing screenwriting and visual development process” (cited in Szostak & Lucasfilm Ltd., 2015). In this section, I aim to outline my development strategy in the earliest stages of the writing process of my screenplay, *At the Crossing*. I will begin by detailing my use of various multimodal techniques which I employed in developing the story and chronicle the further stages of the writing process leading to the final draft.

I view my writing during the earliest period of development as an ‘autonomous’ mode of screenwriting. I use the term ‘autonomous’ in relation to the implied reader of the screenplay. In this instance, as I was not writing a production document or for any particular practitioner, I was free to experiment with alternative approaches to the craft which differ from the strict industrial and conformist approaches to the craft. As a screenwriter, I am very aware of the expectations that practitioners in this field should continue to use screenwriting software and to confine their work to the written word. As I was not interested at this point in selling the screenplay to a production company or in developing the script into a film, I felt no obligation to adhere to such industrial traditions. Instead, I began experimenting with a variety of multimodal methods of storytelling to explore what form this story might eventually take. As

Janet Horowitz Murray describes in her work *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (1997), the communicative power of digital technologies in conjunction with the written word is far stronger than the latter on its own:

The knowledge of a foreign language, for instance, can be better conveyed with examples from multiple speakers in authentic environments than with lists of words on a page. The dramatic power of Hamlet's soliloquies is better illustrated by multiple performance examples in juxtaposition with the text than by the printed version alone. Discussions of film art make more sense when they are grounded by excerpted scenes from the movies being discussed (Murray 1997).

Murray is suggesting that the use of imagery or other media to compliment the written word can enhance the communication of the idea. In keeping with Murray's argument, I developed various conceptual movie posters as a starting point. As a filmmaker, poster design is a common task in preparing films for festivals or general distribution and so it is a technique with which I was already familiar as a seasoned filmmaker. I employed this standard marketing device, the poster, as a method of idea generation by experimenting with visual aesthetics, marketing taglines and even potential casting choices to aid me in furthering developing the story. This method was successful, and these posters proved valuable in conveying a sense of theme and tone for an entire film in a single image. Two posters were conceived and developed at this point in the creative process. The first poster (figure 11) is a 'teaser' poster designed to whet the appetite of the reader or viewer. It employs basic graphics and minimalistic colour and information. The second poster (figure 12) is the main poster and uses photography rather than digitally created graphics to communicate character and location. It gives a sense of what the final film might look like, in contrast to the teaser poster which relies strictly on the reader's imagination to fill those gaps. Both posters were used throughout the writing process as a reference for the thematic and tonal goals of the piece.



Figure 11. A teaser poster for *At the Crossing*.

Upon completion of the posters, I began simultaneously outlining a detailed plot for the story, as well as creating a series of conceptual artwork images. The purpose of these additional visual aids was to explore further what the world of this film might look like, as well as to initially storyboard potential ‘trailer moments’ for the story. A ‘trailer moment’ is a loosely used term in filmmaking communities and I use it here to describe the scenes in a film that are written to be included in trailers as a way of captivating audiences early. An example of such a scene might be an impressive visual effect shot in a fantasy or sci-fi film or a clever ‘one-liner’ in an action film. These moments have a way of making the actual film more enticing to an audience and are a common technique demanded of screenwriters in the mainstream industry. In this case, these ‘trailer moments’ captured the essence of the highs and lows of the story; the late action scenes as well as the quieter, but equally dramatic, earlier scenes. An understanding of these moments helped anchor my writing as I outlined the skeletal structure of the story around key turning points. A sample of these concept images can be found below.

Each piece of conceptual artwork is a composition of many different images relating to Chernobyl, the Ukraine or similar aspects of the landscape, and reflects the themes described. These pictures were taken from various online sources and, through the use of *Adobe Photoshop* and other similar image manipulation programmes, I was able to combine them to form the images shown above. These images inspired the development of the story, but the different assets used in their creation also helped me to understand better the various aspects of the landscape which were unknown to me at the time. One such example was the threat of wolves returning to the exclusion zone and surrounding region. Through further research, I learned that there is a real concern among the locals of the area for the safety of their livestock. This finding was then incorporated into the story and played a crucial metaphorical role in the screenplay.





Figure 13. A selection of conceptual artwork pieces for *At the Crossing*.

Given the importance of character development, I researched the lives of women from the regions surrounding Chernobyl, to get a sense of who they were and their way of life. I drew on the work of filmmaker Holly Morris, in particular, her documentary *The Babushka's of Chernobyl* (2015) as well as Michael Forster Rothbart's *Would You Stay* (2014) in order to gain a contemporary insight of the region. This was complimented by my experiences as an editor for several Chernobyl documentaries in the past. I translated this research into the biographies for each of the characters featured in the story, as well as authentically capturing the atmospheric and aesthetic qualities of the region in the screenplay.

Based on my experiences editing documentaries in the past, as well as my current research practices, I came to see a common theme repeatedly appearing in the articles, discussions about and interviews with different people of the region. That theme was the value of home and community and this realisation began to dictate the course of the story's development. While the multimodal techniques aided in developing location and character specifics, as well as thematic and tonal aspects of the story, they did not benefit the plotting of the first draft of the screenplay. The structure of the story could not be deciphered through such methods and so I referred to traditional scriptwriting convention as my guide in outlining the beats of the story. I employed a conventional three-act structure, which is common in screenwriting practice, and utilised aspects of Maureen Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey* (1990), as well as Helen Jacey's *The Woman in the Story* (2010) as references for developing, what I felt needed to be a particularly strong female protagonist, Sofiya, so as to honour the women of the region who served as the story's inspiration.

The most complex part of the previsualisation process involved the assemblage of a 'thematic trailer'. The trailer involved a combination of imagery and historical video clips of the Chernobyl evacuation, edited together with footage from the film *Lore* (Shortland 2012) which I felt mirrored the screen idea I was trying to communicate, both visually and tonally. I combined these clips with a *TED Talk* by Holly Morris, which highlights the struggle of the older women living in the region (TED 2013). Finally, I used the score from what I considered an equally tonally and visually appropriate film, *The Village* (Shyamalan 2004) written by James Newton Howard, to complete the three-minute piece. I designed the trailer strictly for my benefit and did not share the video online or with other practitioners, in respect of copyright law.



Figure 14. *At the Crossing* visual pitch trailer.

Finally, the title of the screenplay, *At the Crossing*, was borrowed with permission from a work of the same name by the Ukrainian poet Lyubov Sirota, who is synonymous with the subject of the Chernobyl disaster and its effects on the Ukrainian people. I found the title to be highly appropriate, given the metaphorical crossroads in which each character is situated.

Like *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (Abrams 2015), the various multimedia shown above served as a thematic guide as I developed the plot and the characters of the story over a further six months. Though the story changed significantly from the initial concept, it remained

tonally and thematically consistent throughout the three years I spent writing the script. This consistency is possible due to the professionally assembled collection of multimedia which I was able to reference whenever I felt I was losing sight of my creative objectives.

Screenwriter Jack Epps' recent text, *Screenwriting is Rewriting: The Art and Craft of Professional Revision* (2016), demonstrates how important the redrafting stages of screenwriting are for the practitioner. In his introduction to the text, Epps observes that writers "have a love-hate relationship with the task and would rather run barefoot over hot coals than face a rewrite" (2016, 1). To derive a strong screen idea, nurture it and develop it into a working draft of a screenplay is indeed difficult. Without a suitable methodology to guide the writer, the redrafting of that story can prove even more complex. With this in mind, and to inform my rewriting of the screenplay, I employed academic theories of spectatorship and audience response criticism so as to satisfy the consumption and engagement habits of my implied reader and spectator. In the following section of this chapter, I will investigate the theories which guided my rewriting of *At the Crossing*.

Considering the Implied Reader

The first draft of the screenplay was written during August of 2014, almost a year after I had initially begun researching the story and the characters. Nevertheless, even after extensive plot breakdowns, treatments and step outlines, I found that the process of writing the first draft of the screenplay was especially difficult. The page count of this draft was a mere fifty pages, and I recalled one of the unspoken rules of screenwriting practice, as discussed by Field, which states that one page is equal to one minute of screen time (2007, 22). The screenplay was evidently too short for a mainstream feature-length film and required a substantial rewrite if only to amend this skeletal narrative. It was at this point where my consideration for professional standards and industrial expectations began to inform my critique. In my analysis, I found that the character of Sofiya traversed complicated landscapes, occasionally finding herself in difficulty, but never growing as a character in the ways expected from the stages of the Hero's or Heroine's Journey. As I began reflecting on the problems of the draft, I found myself giving great consideration to the implied reader of screenplays due to my continuous referencing of screenplay guides and manuals, but also of the implied spectator due to my self-reflection of the story from a film spectator's perspective. These guides and manuals depict those who typically read screenplays, in particular, agents and producers. This prompted me to give greater consideration to those implied readers, as well as spectators, in the extensive rewrites of the scripts that followed by drawing on narratological devices common to

screenwriting manuals and adapting them based on the existing research of screenwriting and film scholars.

One such frequently cited devices in screenwriting manuals are the character tropes ‘want’ and ‘need’. ‘Want’ and ‘need’ are common among screenwriting enthusiasts thanks to the work of ‘gurus’ such as McKee and Vogler, and describes the character’s pursuit of his or her dramatic ‘want’ and the eventual realisation of an internal ‘need’. Patrick Cattrysse offers a revision of this trope, arguing that the conflict is not between the character’s own ‘want’ and ‘need’ but between that of the character’s ‘want’ and the *audience’s* ‘need’. “The conflict (if there is one) plays between what a character wants to do and what they should do” (Cattrysse 2010, 91). The revision can be summed up as such: due to the structural qualities of the film’s narrative, the information that is revealed to the audience may not correlate with that which the character receives in the story. Thus, it can become clear to the audience what the character’s ‘need’ is long before it does to the character in the story. “It is the audience who judge what a character should or should not do” based on their own value systems (Cattrysse 2010, 91). The writer’s ability to understand these value systems is significant. Audiences draw on their values and project them onto a character as a means of engaging with the story, as Cattrysse explains:

This re-definition links the wants and needs debate with the much wider and far more complex study of audience involvement and its relationships with the value systems expressed in a narrative and those experienced by a viewer. (2010, 83)

This imaginary connection that exists between the reader or viewer and the character can generate feelings of sympathy and empathy in the audience, which can lead to identification. Understanding the character’s internal ‘need’ first requires audiences to reflect on their own characteristics, such as bravery, cowardice or on the many other traits for which characters are tested for in cinema. The process can reveal, consciously or otherwise, an audience’s own character traits. Genre can also play a vital role in determining the connection between character and audience. The genre of a film helps establish archetypal characteristics in the mind of the audience, which can lead to assumptions of genre convention and inform whether they will engage with, or repel against, a character.

From an industrial perspective, the screenwriter is expected to consider the audience in their writing at all times, and I argue that facilitating and manipulating their identification with characters in the story is one means of engaging the implied reader or spectator. This section then details my attempts to apply these academic theories to the subsequent redrafting of *At the Crossing*. As a method of analysis, I will be using Clover’s “Final Girl theory” (1987), because

it was used as a narrative technique in the writing of the screenplay. Final Girl theory is suitable because of its role in spectatorship studies in cinema, but also because it exemplifies the “communion” (O. Thomas 1984) that exists between character and audience.¹⁹

In considering reader engagement with the text, as well as attempting to manipulate that engagement, I reconsidered the concept of a single character drama and placed greater focus on the character of Olena instead due to the inherent conflict which resides in her character. Olena longs to escape the harsh landscape depicted in the screenplay, while Sofiya is content in her existence and is willing to fight to protect it. It became apparent at this point in the writing process that the character of Olena had greater potential to grow and change as a character, which in turn would allow the audience to enter into a subconscious commitment to her as she makes character-defining choices on her journey. To satisfy the themes of home and community that now guided the story’s development, I explored the concept of a dual protagonist drama, where both characters would compete for their conflicting, but equally identifiable beliefs. To place both characters, Sofiya and Olena, on equal footing, I decided that they should be siblings, rather than mother and child.

It is important to note that to make any definite claims of audience engagement with character would be troubling and my statements here are situated in a theoretical context. However, the professional screenwriter cannot expect to ‘screen test’ his or her writing with a potential reader or spectator and so I too was aware that a quantitative analysis of the script, which might investigate how readers engaged with it, would be impossible. I, therefore, began conducting significant research into audience identification studies. As a screenwriter, I am very aware of the industrial pressures placed on me to distance myself from other aspects of film production and operate strictly in the realm of pre-production by using only the written word. With this in mind, I disregarded the theories of identification which lend themselves to the cinema apparatus and instead concentrated on a method of writing that borrowed from Freudian writings of identification as described by Bronfenbrenner (1960).²⁰ The following section will explore this field of spectatorship and audience identification studies, and demonstrate in what way these studies informed the various development drafts of *At the Crossing*.

¹⁹ David O’ Thomas uses the term ‘communion’ in his article, *Moments, Experiential Density and Immediacy: The Screenplay as a Blueprint for Communion* (1984) to describe the way in which an audience forms a connection with a character in a screen work.

²⁰ Christian Metz’s work on identification in cinema (1975) is recognised here, but was not suitable for this approach to identification studies.

Audience Identification with Character

The field of spectatorship has produced an array of theories to master the reading and viewing practices of the movie-going audience. The study of identification is one such area of research, and it reveals much about how we read and spectate. Identification studies in relation to cinema also provide a valuable spring for screenwriters looking to channel their ideal reader. The term ‘identification’ can be problematic due to the variety of definitions that are associated with it. While the work of Christian Metz (1975), one of the most prolific scholars of identification studies in cinema, is acknowledged here, this research privileges the Freudian definition of partial identification, or secondary identification, as described by Kagan, because of its suitability to character development in screenwriting.

Primary identification referred to the initial, undifferentiated perception of the infant in which an external object was perceived as part of the self, while secondary identification began after the child had discriminated a world of objects separate from the self... Identification was described by Freud as ‘the endeavour to mould a person’s own ego after the fashion of one that has been taken as a model’. (Kagan 1958, 297–98)

Audience identification with character “simplifies the relationship between audience and story” (Dancyger and Rush 2006, 117). Screenwriting analysts Ken Dancyger and Jeff Rush suggest that audiences identify with characters “who are in difficult situations” (Dancyger and Rush 2006, 117). Still, it is arguable that it is not the situation with which we identify with, as after all, how many of us can identify with being in the situations that most Hollywood movies propose? For example, an audience can hardly relate to the life of Maximus, the Roman General, in *Gladiator* (1999), though we can certainly relate to Maximus mourning the loss of his mentor and father figure, Emperor Marcus Aurelius, or identify with his decision to turn his back on the murderous heir Commodus, when he asks for Maximus’ loyalty afterwards. Audiences relate to the choices and actions a character makes throughout a narrative. While this is not the only method by which an audience can identify with a text or character, it is a conducive method for screenwriters seeking to use identification theories as a literary device, given the emphasis placed on action and character decisions in screenwriting.

Carol Clover’s Final Girl theory, explored in her 1987 work *Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film*, is a ‘slasher’ horror film trope that suitably encapsulates the theory of identification through character decision. The Final Girl is the “androgynous female character who suffers the monster’s tortures throughout the film, but who ultimately defeats him and

survives” (Briefel 2005, 17). In simple terms, the Final Girl is a single character who consistently evades the monster or killer. As her story progresses, the Final Girl becomes stronger and wiser, until she alone is capable of escaping or even defeating the antagonist.

The Final Girl theory is the result of genre analysis and a deconstruction of the completed film, but, it is a framework that can be reverse-engineered to help in the writer’s goal to manipulate the audience’s engagement with a character. After all, the Final Girl survives because of the wise actions and decisions she makes throughout her journey and this can facilitate audience and reader engagement, if only because of the many times we have found ourselves captivated by the dramatic irony of the scene, shouting at the screen for the protagonist not to go down the figurative dark corridor alone. The underlying themes of this trope exploit deeply rooted views of masculinity and femininity in cinema, relying heavily on psychological audience responses, such as male castration anxiety. Briefel (2005) explains the significance of Clover’s theories in relation to identification studies:

The Final Girl’s subjection to and eventual victory over the monster provide a site of identification for the male spectator. Revising Laura Mulvey’s view that the male spectator’s gaze is sadistic, Clover argues that his identification with the Final Girl demonstrates a masochistic impulse: ‘The willingness and even eagerness (so we judge from these films’ enormous popularity) of the male viewer to throw in his emotional lot, if only temporarily, with not only a woman but a woman in fear and pain, at least in the first instance, would seem to suggest that he has a vicarious stake in that fear and pain’. (Briefel 2005, 17)

The theory of the Final Girl is also a theory of cross-identification because it suggests that audiences shift their identification from one character to another and also across gender. Klaus Rieser argues that male audiences do not immediately identify with the Final Girl (2001, 384) and that their initial identification is instead placed with the monster or the killer. From a structural perspective this can be explained by the fact that the identity of the Final Girl is elusive early in the story; yet, when her identity is revealed, we shift our positioning and with it our identification onto her, as Clover explains:

We are linked, in this way, with the killer in the early part of the film, usually before we have seen him directly and before we have come to know the Final Girl in any detail. Our closeness to him wanes as our closeness to the Final Girl waxes – a shift underwritten by storyline as well as camera position. (1987, 208)

The shifting positioning described is facilitated by the narrative. Certainly, it is the case that not every ‘slasher’ film asks audiences to position themselves with the killer. A common

argument for our attraction to these films is that we are engrossed in the thrill of escaping the killer, much like a horror video game. Though, it is not unreasonable to think that audiences would feel wholly unsatisfied if they were viewing a 'slasher' film that did not contain any 'slashing'. In *Perverse Spectators: The Practices of Film Reception* (Staiger 2000), Staiger uses *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), one of the earliest 'slashers' and an example of Final Girl theory, to not only demonstrate perverse identification on the part of the audience, but also to defend her own positioning with the cannibalistic family in the film.

They are, after all, worthy of our respect. They have responded ingeniously to their culture and environment. They speak for the value of traditional crafts and the sanctity of private property. They have not gone on welfare. They have decorated their home in a way that reflects their personality (grandmother and the family dog have been dried and put on display, their armchairs are armchairs). Besides, anyone who expresses himself with a chainsaw can't be all bad (Staiger 2000, 182).

Staiger's amusing analysis stands as a fitting example of how even the most repulsive characters can become a focal point for our identification. The key to the success of these films lies in the perverse corners of our psyche, which is what makes the Final Girl trope such a fascinating and enlightening avenue of audience research. Our desire to position ourselves with the monster in these films reveals much about our value systems as viewers and the aggressive tendencies that reside in us.

As Cattrysse explains in his article, doxa, "the dominant opinions, norms and values shared by a group of people in a specific time-space context" affects how audiences engage with characters on screen (2010, 91). They draw their conclusions as to what the characters should and should not do next, based on these dominant opinions and values. This means that the screenwriter should give consideration to these factors in their writing, and in doing so, the writer encourages audiences to challenge, define and understand their values. Like the characters of a screenplay following a predetermined 'arc', so too are audiences being taken on a journey of growth and discovery. The arc for the audience, in this example, involves challenging their aggressive tendencies by taking up a position with a morally ambiguous character, the killer, before finally transitioning to a morally 'good' character later in the story, the Final Girl.

Psycho (1960) facilitates the kind of perverse spectatorship that Staiger speaks of, but it is also appropriate for studying audience identification in cinema. The story demonstrates cross-identification early in the story, as the audience is initially positioned with Marion Crane. However, their attachment soon shifts to Norman Bates, as Leo Braudy explains:

We follow Norman into the next room and watch as he moves aside a picture to reveal a peephole into Marion's cabin. He watches her undress and, in some important way, we feel the temptress is more guilty than the Peeping Tom (Braudy 1968, 25).

The male gaze only serves to cement our identification with Bates. Mulvey's analysis of the Hitchcock-directed *Vertigo* (1958) can be applied to *Psycho* also. The viewer "finds himself exposed as complicit, caught in the moral ambiguity of looking" (Mulvey 1975). This complicity continues in *Psycho* with Crane's murder soon after. "Finally at peace with herself, she is killed by Norman Bates and we are left in a position of voyeur, and so are implicated in her death" (Dancyger and Rush 2006, 179). It can be argued that it is not just the objectification of Marion that shifts the audience's position from one character to the other, but it is also the character's traits that shift our identification.

While *Psycho* is a valuable case study for understanding the identification phenomena in cinema, it also highlights the complexity of writing with an intended experience in mind for the implied reader or spectator. Hitchcock, as a writer/director, has frequently exploited our desire to identify with morally 'good' characters. As Braudy highlights, "he plays malevolently on the audience assumption that the character we sympathize with most, whose point of view we share, is the same character who is morally right in the story the movie tells" (1968, 24).

Even Hitchcock cannot escape the fact that his implied readers were unpredictable. If Hitchcock intended such a reading of the text, then it is almost certain that a reader may reject the notion that Bates is an identifiable character. This is a controversial idea after all. Nevertheless, a screenwriter cannot expect to satisfy the value systems of every reader. From the point of view of Hitchcock's ideal reader, Norman Bates possesses all the qualities to make him an identifiable character. After all, Norman cares for his ailing mother, whom we believe to still be alive in the family home at that point in the story. He also works tirelessly to maintain the family business. It is not difficult for audiences, who are constantly projecting their own value systems onto the characters, to align themselves with Bates, given his seemingly admirable traits and the fact that we already acknowledge Marion Crane to be a thief. Due to the nature of the story, it is also equally possible that this perverse identification is intentional. The thrill of the film after the death of one of the protagonists, Marion, now comes in the form of the audience's shared fears and anxieties with Norman as he tries to cover up the murder. Grodal's analysis of *Psycho* from a character identification perspective gives weight to this notion of "unnatural sympathy" (1997, 95). Grodal uses the scene of Bates trying to dispose of Crane's

car in the swamp as an example of the audience's identification with Bates. The car slowly begins to sink into the swamp, but then it stops momentarily.

The viewer worries during the short halt in the sinking and experiences a feeling of relief when the car starts to sink again. The viewer has cognitively identified himself with the young man over a longer period of time, and has, during this period, been 'forced' to 'actualize' the emotions which are presupposed in order to give coherence and meaning to his acts ('I must wash off the smear of blood', 'I must dispose of the body and the car', and so forth). (Grodal 1997, 95)

The success of *Psycho* as a thriller and as a case study for audience identification, is in large part because of the way that it is structured in the screenplay. Historical insights into Hitchcock's collaborations with his screenwriters reveal how highly he considered the screenplay above all other modes of film production.²¹ This further highlights the instrumental role of the screenplay in directing the responses of an audience in the movie theatre. In the next section, I will demonstrate how these theories informed the narratological structure of *At the Crossing* during the extensive rewriting phase.

The Application of Audience Studies in the Redrafting Process

The above section has demonstrated the ways that Final Girl theory can be used as a narrative framework for facilitating engagement between audience and character, much like the way audiences engaged with *Psycho*. The structural aspects that make Final Girl theory so compelling from the perspective of audience positioning and identification are not exclusive to the 'slasher' sub-genre. The theory of the Final Girl, combined with Cattrysse's redefined theory of 'want' and 'need', acts as the underpinning theories for guiding the development of this screenplay.

This method was one of writing both character action and reaction and borrows from the screenwriting adage 'show, don't tell', where writers must demonstrate a character's traits through actions, and, more significantly, their reactions to events in the story (Gallo 2012, 77). In *At the Crossing*, it is the characters' actions and reactions to the events around them that make them identifiable to audiences. We consider their decision-making process during times of crisis and compare it against our personal character attributes and our subjective criteria for right and wrong. This allows Cattrysse's redefinition to be realised, as readers and audiences

²¹ Walter Raubicheck's *Scripting Hitchcock: Psycho, The Birds, and Marnie* (2011) provides insight into the Hitchcock's relationship with his screenwriters.

can project their value systems onto a character and ‘know’ what it is the character should do next in the cycle of events. The story also employs structural characteristics found in my analysis of Final Girl theory and uses shifting positioning and cross-identification from one character to another. Thus, in theory, the screenplay functions as a structural blueprint for engaging audiences with the characters of the story, in ways similar to that which have already been discussed.

As explained, the concepts of ‘home’ and ‘community’ were used to allow audiences of any background to better engage with a story that is otherwise based on a ‘localised’ incident. Even though the value we place on these concepts differs from person to person, it can activate the reader’s engagement to allow them to form a connection with the story. Like the reader, each sister has a different, albeit valid, point of view on the crisis. Sofiya’s journey to retrieve the animals is driven by a loyalty to those who came before her and to her desire to succeed in a place that is forcing her to leave. Olena, on the other hand, longs to escape this oppressive landscape and is driven by a yearning freedom, a curiosity of the outside world and a chance to prosper elsewhere.

The Final Girl paradigm changed significantly when employed in this story. The obvious differences lie in its tone and genre. *At the Crossing* was not intended to be a horror film, nor does it suggest a degree of violence or death that such films are known for. Structurally, the surface qualities of the story are noticeably different in that Olena is identified early on as a clear candidate for the Final Girl moniker, rather than being revealed later at the convenience of the writer. The lack of a clear and singular antagonist is also something that signifies a departure from the trope. But, from a character development perspective, the story maintains many of the hallmarks of the Final Girl. While initially appearing antagonistic to her older sister early in the story, Olena grows into a responsible young woman on her own personal journey. She becomes a saviour figure to Sofiya, demonstrates clever survival skills and refuses to back down when faced with challenges. Her arc mirrors that of the Final Girl. Likewise, Sofiya quickly becomes a morally questionable character as she grows more desperate to find her stolen livestock. Sofiya occasionally breaks the law, is aggressive when challenged by her younger sister and disregards her responsibility to protect Olena by forcing her to follow on the journey, even when all hope is seemingly lost. She may not inhabit the role of the killer that we are familiar with in the ‘slasher’ sub-genre, but she meets the conditions necessary to challenge Olena enough for Olena to change as a character in her own right.

Cattrysse’s redefinition is fully realised in the closing scenes of the screenplay when both characters return home. Olena, once the carefree of the two, is now more understanding

of her family's legacy and is driven by her experiences to work harder than ever to maintain the homestead. In keeping with Clover's Final Girl theory, Olena has changed as a result of these experiences and evolved as a character. Meanwhile, Sofiya, now with child, has a different perspective, not unlike Olena's from the beginning of the story, and contemplates her future in this harsh landscape. Both sisters have abandoned their 'want' in favour of their internal 'need', but their 'wants' and 'needs' have also mirrored. Sofiya's 'want' has become Olena's 'need'. Olena's 'need' has become Sofiya's 'want'. The audience has experienced both sides of the sisters' dilemma, to stay or leave and it is left to them to decide what the characters should do next, based on their values that have been tried and tested throughout the story.

My research into audience identification studies, and my conclusions of how one can translate this research into their writing has benefitted the creative practice of this thesis and informed the most extensive rewrites of the screenplay.²² It offered a window into the mindset of the implied reader based on a methodology of theoretical readership and spectatorship models which are common to mainstream screenwriting literature. Furthermore, this research helped me to better understand my own creative process in the rewriting stages of a screenplay by framing it in a theoretical context. In the next section, I will investigate how the transition to a more 'industry-facing' mode of writing further affected the redrafting of *At the Crossing*.

Considering Industrial Influences in the Writing Process

In the previous sections, I described how I used commercial screenwriting pedagogical methods to evaluate my rewriting of *At the Crossing* in order to give consideration to the implied readers within 'the industry'. The reader of screenplays, as depicted in mainstream screenwriting literature, mirrored the reader who was ultimately fabricated in my mind during this time. This reader was a combination of script readers at an agency, screenplay agents, film funding bodies and even Hollywood studio executives to a degree. As I have previously highlighted in this thesis, the chance of being successfully recognised by these readers is unlikely. However, the advent of digital technologies in the filmmaking sector has increased the likelihood that screenwriters, both amateur and professional, can see their work adapted to the screen with relative ease than before. Therefore, it is essential that screenwriters give greater consideration to the practitioners who engage with their script in a production setting, than the so-called gatekeepers of the screen industry. Researching screenwriting in a 'industry facing'

²² My research into reception and identification studies, and the application of such theories in screenwriting has been published in the *Journal of Screenwriting* (Finnegan 2016).

mode, where the writer considers the actual production logistics of cinema in their process, can provide a more accurate insight into the type of readers with whom screenwriters most commonly engage with, as well as their influence on the writing process. In industry facing modes of screenwriting, the author of the text considers, not only those individuals and organisations mentioned above, but also the practitioners that engage with a script in a film's development, specifically the crew. While there is some research conducted on the collaborations between screenwriters and directors (as well as other practitioners in a production), there is little research into how working in this climate affects the act of writing itself.

To situate myself in position of someone writing with industrial influences in mind, I drew on my expertise as a filmmaker and producer (as well as a career as an assistant director) to develop a professional and industrial standard production schedule breakdown based on the most recent draft of the script at that time. The schedule breakdown was necessary to determine how many days the hypothetical production would need and to determine how many working hours to pay the cast and crew. I then adapted this schedule into a standard budget breakdown.

The schedule and budget fixed the producer and other above-the-line personnel as the implied readers of my screenplay. There were countless other influences throughout this process, such as the implied cinematographer's influence on the visual cues or the ways in which an implied actor can affect the performative qualities of the screenplay, however, for the sake of simplicity, I focused my efforts in this thesis on how the budgetary and scheduling logistics informed the rewriting of the script. Figure 15 shows the schedule breakdown, to help in my explanation of its development.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Scene	Act	Sequence	Synopsis	Location	INT / EXT	Day / Night	Running Time	Pages	Story Day	Time of Day	Set	Characters
30	1	13		UK	EXT	DAY (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1 3/8"	6	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE - MORNING	BABUSHKA/ YOUNG GIRL
86	2	38		UK	EXT	NIGHT (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1/8"	10	00:00	THE LAKEHOUSE	
87	2	38		UK	INT	NIGHT (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1/8"	10	00:00	THE LAKEHOUSE, BEDROOM	YOUNG GIRL/ BABUSHKA/ MAN/ YOUNG SO
88	2	38		UK	EXT	NIGHT (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1 1/8"	10	00:00	THE LAKEHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL/ BABUSHKA/ MAN/ YOUNG SO
102	2	44		UK	EXT	NIGHT (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"4/8"	12	00:00	THE LAKEHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL/ BABUSHKA
118	2	48		UK	EXT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"2/8"	12	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARM	RADIO/ YOUNG GIRL
119	2	48		UK	INT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"2/8"	12	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE	RADIO/ YOUNG GIRL/ TWO SOLDIERS
120	2	48		UK	EXT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1/8"	12	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARM	YOUNG GIRL/ TWO SOLDIERS/ EVACUEE
121	2	48		UK	INT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1/8"	12	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL
122	2	48		UK	INT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1/8"	12	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, BEDROOM	YOUNG GIRL
123	2	48		UK	EXT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"3/8"	12	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARM	YOUNG GIRL/ TWO SOLDIERS/ EVACUEE
132	3	52		UK	EXT	DAY (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"4/8"	13	00:00	THE LAKEHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL/ YOUNG SOFIYA/ BABUSHKA
END OF DAY 1												
1	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1 2/8"	1	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARM	POACHER #1/ POACHER #2/ SOFIYA
2	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"3/8"	1	00:00	ROAD	OLENA/ POACHER #1/ POACHER #2
4	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"2/8"	1	00:00	ROAD	OLENA
5	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1/8"	1	00:00	CROSSROADS	OLENA
6	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1/8"	1	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARM	OLENA
7	1	2		UK	EXT	DAWN	00:00:00	"1/8"	2	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARM	VITALIY
8	1	2		UK	INT	MORNING	00:00:00	"3/8"	2	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA/ SOFIYA
9	1	2		UK	EXT	MORNING	00:00:00	"1 2/8"	2	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA/ SOFIYA/ VITALIY
10	1	3		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"7/8"	2	00:00	POLICE STATION	SOFIYA/ VITALIY
11	1	4		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2/8"	2	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARM, BARN	SOFIYA
12	1	4		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"7/8"	2	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA/ SOFIYA
13	1	4		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"5/8"	2	00:00	BARN	FEMALE RANGER/ SOFIYA/ VET
14	1	4		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"1"	2	00:00	BARN	FEMALE RANGER/ SOFIYA
END OF DAY 2												
17	1	6		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"2/8"	2	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARM	SOFIYA
18	1	7		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1 2/8"	2	00:00	LOCAL WOODLAND	FRIEND #1/ FRIEND #2/ FRIEND #3/ OLENA
19	1	8		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"2/8"	3	00:00	MARKET	PAVLO/ OLENA/ SOFIYA
20	1	8		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1 4/8"	3	00:00	MARKET	MARKET MAN/ OLENA/ PAVLO/ SOFIYA
15	1	5		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2/8"	2	00:00	POLICE STATION	YOUNG POLICE OFFICER/ SOFIYA/ VITALIY/ Z
16	1	5		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1/8"	2	00:00	POLICE STATION	SOFIYA
END OF DAY 3												
21	1	9		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"2/8"	3	00:00	SOFIYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA

Figure 15. Production schedule breakdown for *At the Crossing*.

The screenplay is deconstructed and represented on the spreadsheet by a series of columns which indicate scene numbers from the screenplay draft, act numbers, sequences of scenes, scene synopses, shooting locations and interior and exterior identifiers. Furthermore, it includes day and night identifiers, scene running times, script pages, story days, as well as the scene settings and featured characters. The result is an extensive list of information that allows any member of the crew to visualise the logistical aspects of the production, such as the number of day or night scenes or how many pages of the script are being filmed in a certain location.

I chose to organise the schedule breakdown by scene setting, but, it is worth noting here that the story setting is not the only factor I could have employed in organising the schedule for the production. An equally valid factor to consider would have been the use of actors and other performers. This is common practice in commercial productions, where high profile actors are used. Due to their limited availability, it can be more productive to organise and schedule a shoot around their working habits. In the case of *At the Crossing*, though, I had decided that a more realistic avenue of development would be one that did not pursue such high-profile actors and would instead focus on location viability. This is evident in the 'set' column of the breakdown.

Day one of the shoot (represented by the rows *above* the black 'end of day 1' row) focuses on shooting the scenes which take place at Sofiya and Olena's lake house. Furthermore, these scenes are then reorganised in this group by day and night and then finally by interior and

exterior. The final factor to consider is the working conditions for personnel on the production. If it appears that there are too many scenes to shoot in a single day or that the production crew are being worked for too many hours, then the group of scenes is divided across two days or more instead. These factors are considered based on union agreements and legal working limits. The result is a running order of scenes that is practically and logistically organised to take into account factors such as lighting, weather, story continuity and personnel working conditions.

With such an in-depth schedule breakdown completed (figure 15), it becomes possible then to develop an appropriate companion budget in order to further situate the screenplay in a production mode. A typical film production budget contains a detailed breakdown of cast and crew requirements, specifically, how many days for which they will be needed for, the daily rate of pay, as well as allowances for departments such as property (props), costume and other purchases. I initially developed the budget with the intention of following a typical feature film production model. This included a full production crew with heads of department, assistants and trainee crew as well. This method of assembling a crew is common in the mainstream industry and in some instances, is a union requirement. In keeping with this I also adhered to the typical daily union rates as stipulated by BECTU (BECTU 2017), one of the leading British entertainment unions. The end result of this budget was one that gave consideration to each department, as well as budgeting for contingencies, insurance, marketing and other essentials in a typical large production. The final budget for the film was also one that mirrored what Jared Moshe outlined in his discussion of *Dead Man's Burden*, a case study I chose due to its logistical similarities to *At the Crossing*. In short, the budget of £200,000 was appropriate and in keeping with industrial standards. In order to investigate how my writing might be affected by this attempt to adapt the script to the screen, I decided to set a more achievable budget, one that would be more in line with my preferred level of underground or independent production models and one that would satisfy a common requirement of screenwriters, which is to consider budgetary limitations.

One of the most drastic measures to reduce the budget involved the implementation of non-unionised salaries for all crew and the reduction of production personnel overall. This is not an ideal solution but it is once again a common solution in underground sectors of cinema to reduce overall production costs. The result of this revised budget can be seen below (figure 16). The budget 'top sheet' is one of many sections of a production budget. Each department will have its own detailed breakdown of how funds are allocated, but the 'top sheet' is necessary in order to gain an overview of the financial breakdown. It functions as a summary of the different departments in the production. The departments which were of interest in this

research, were 'Talent', 'Travel/Housing', 'Locations' and 'Property'. These were of interest because they were the departments which impacted the redrafting more than any other. A financial breakdown of the casting requirements revealed that the casting of background talent (extras) proved very costly. This in turn affected the travel and accommodation budget. In terms of locations and property, the budget revealed the many different locations that were in the script, as well as the many props would be needed to populate these places. This was something which was not immediately noticeable during script reads and rewrites.

Account #	Category	Specifics	Total
1	STORY & OTHER RIGHTS		£0.00
2	PRODUCER UNIT		£0.00
3	DIRECTOR UNIT		£0.00
4	TALENT		£13,305.00
5	TRAVEL/HOUSING		£32,500.00
TOTAL ABOVE THE LINE COSTS:			£45,805.00
6	PRODUCTION STAFF		£1,350.00
7	BACKGROUND		£1,000.00
8	PRODUCTION DESIGN		£1,850.00
9	PROPERTY		£5,850.00
10	SET DRESSING		£2,500.00
11	SET CONSTRUCTION		£0.00
12	SPECIAL EFFECTS		£3,050.00
13	CAMERA		£3,850.00
14	ELECTRIC		£2,000.00
15	GRIP		£500.00
16	PRODUCTION SOUND		£1,050.00
17	SET OPERATIONS		£1,050.00
18	COSTUME/WARDROBE		£2,000.00
19	HAIR/MAKEUP		£2,450.00
20	LOCATIONS		£4,350.00
TOTAL BELOW THE LINE COSTS:			£33,650.00
21	PRODUCTION STOCK/DIGITIZING		£0.00
22	PRODUCTION OVERHEAD		£0.00
23	EDITING		£1,000.00
24	DIGITAL CONFORM/ FINISH		£0.00
25	POST PRODUCTION SOUND		£3,850.00
26	MUSIC		£1,500.00
27	CGI		£2,500.00
28	TITLES		£0.00
29	POST PRODUCTION OVERHEAD		£0.00
TOTAL POST PRODUCTION COSTS:			£8,850.00
30	GENERAL DISTRIBUTION LABOR/FEES		£0.00
31	DVD/BLU-RAY DISTRIBUTION		£0.00
32	PUBLICITY		£0.00
33	CREATIVE MATERIALS		£0.00
34	PRINTING MATERIALS		£0.00
35	THEATRICAL PRINTS		£0.00
36	DIRECT MEDIA		£0.00
37	GENERAL OVERHEAD		£0.00
38	OTHER DELIVERY EXPENSES		£0.00
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION/MARKETING COSTS:			£0.00
GRAND TOTAL:			£88,305.00

Figure 16. The production budget 'top sheet' for *At the Crossing*.

The narrative itself was greatly revised to accommodate these budgetary restrictions and was the main influence on the story. The raid on the farm, as depicted in scene one, was initially a complex action sequence which would have put immense pressure on the animals used in the production, as well as placing great logistical demands on the production crew. With this in mind, the scene was greatly rewritten to limit the view of the audience, thus leading to a more suspenseful experience, whilst also reducing the dangerous and impractical requirements of the scene with inventive sound design and suggestion.

Scene fourteen of the screenplay originally featured the protagonist Sofiya walking through the nearby town, to find a protest underway in response to the latest wave of poacher raids. This scene would involve many extras, the occupation of the village square and, like before, presented many logistical demands which would have increased the budget of the film. This was revised to instead depict a simple conversation between Sofiya and police officer Vitaliy in a police station interview room. Much of the same information was communicated as before, such as the frustrations of the townspeople, or the climate of fear and hostility in the region.

In *scene thirty-two*, Olena and her friends are walking through town, only for her to see Anton, the young poacher, smoking a cigarette outside the police station. This was first written to feature a similar protest as before, where villagers were outraged at Anton's presence and demanding justice for their own suffering, but due to the logistical challenges of filming such a densely populated scene, it was simplified to reflect the limitations of the production. *Scene forty-nine* features Olena and Anton crossing the forbidden exclusion zone, initially described in the screenplay as a busy border crossing, populated by armed guards. To cater to the requirements of the budget, I revised the scene to show the two characters carefully crossing through an abandoned part of the border, with no other people in sight. This reduced the number of extras and specific location requirements of that scene, such as vehicles, props and costumes.

Finally, in *scenes 122-127*, during the flashback of the town evacuation after the initial disaster, it was decided that the number of extras and requirements of the scene would be too high and complex for a feasible shoot of this scale. Instead, I reused Sofiya's farmhouse location again and featured only a handful of extras being transported in a nearby truck.

These script rewrites demonstrate the typical work of screenwriters in an 'industry facing' setting, where the screenwriter is expected to collaborate with producers and directors to facilitate the production with a narrative that is feasible to produce. It also caters to the requirements of actors and other practitioners. I believe that this has now been achieved and that through careful consideration for the implied reader, as well as the budgeting and

scheduling logistics of a low-budget independent film production, I have developed a producible screenplay which captivates and challenges its readership through engaging and identifiable characters and storytelling. This approach to the writing of the script significantly changed the nature of the story world. Firstly, in my attempt to write feasible shooting locations, I inadvertently removed any specific references to the Chernobyl disaster. While there are many references to the nuclear fallout, which has poisoned the region, the script itself does not explicitly reference the region or the disaster of 1986. The second key aspect of the story that was changed by this mode of writing was the depiction of wildlife in the story. As described previously, my research into the biology of the Chernobyl landscape revealed how the threat of wolves returning to the region was upsetting the environment. I employed this factor into my story as a metaphorical means of communicating the invisible poison that was contaminating the environment. However, in keeping with my attempts to reduce the complexity of the adaptation of the story to the screen, I replaced any reference to these wolves with dogs instead as they would be budget friendly and, from experience, easier to work with on set.

Both of these examples signal the ways in which the writing process is affected in an ‘industry facing’ setting, and were necessary sacrifices in the creation of a producible screenplay that could be developed on a modest budget and with limited resources.

Conclusion

With regards to my research question, the writing of *At the Crossing*, from its conception until its current draft allowed my research into the unseen contributions of screenwriters on a production, as well as the industrial influences which affect the rewriting process, to be ‘industry facing’ in as much as was possible during this research. Therefore, the goal of this chapter was to deconstruct the writing and re-writing process under these specific conditions in order to reveal potentially fascinating, yet underexplored, approaches to script development and understand better my own process as a writer. The first section of this chapter discussed the variety of multi-modal techniques employed in the development of the story, as well as their benefit to the writer in communicating the screen idea. Highlighting the advantages of this mode of research is vital, given its usefulness from a personal perspective in understanding the tonal and thematic aspects of *At the Crossing*, but also because of the popularity of this technique in different sectors of the industry as well, notably in the development of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and *The Mummy*.

The second section of the chapter demonstrated the ways in which studies of spectatorship and identification studies can be beneficial to screenwriting practice, where, traditionally, academic studies are rejected. I used Catrysse's redefinition of 'want' and 'need' as a starting point on this journey, and I privileged Clover's Final Girl theory as one potential framework for approaching the writing of a screenplay with audience engagement as a key objective. The manipulation of this identification through character development can provide an engaging experience for the reader or viewer that is reminiscent of the case studies explored in the chapter. The application of academic research in screenwriting can also offer greater agency for the screenplay in filmmaking practice, no longer just a blueprint for a film but one for engagement with a viewer or reader.

The journey of the Final Girl mirrors the structural qualities of Campbell-ian mythology, where the characters' 'growth' is linked to their ability to discard their 'want' in favour of the 'need'. The reader can experience catharsis in these moments, something that screenwriters often seek to encourage from their work. It is important to acknowledge that screenplay structure is not a uniform idea, as is demonstrated by the vast selection of varied stories in cinema. However, the emphasis placed on uniformity in screenwriting manual culture, as well as in many screenwriting workshops and classrooms, provides a useful starting point from which such an exploration into audience engagement can commence.

The chapter also demonstrated my application of these frameworks to the rewriting of *At the Crossing*, which served as a canvas from where I could explore these theories of implied readership and spectatorship in a practical setting. I determined that the act of writing, combined with the critical research undertaken to support the screenplay, allows writers to understand better the different ways in which audiences respond to a text and engage with its various aspects. In this respect, the practice-led portion of this research was a success. The script demonstrates the effectiveness of these theories outside of the 'slasher' sub-genre and offers a method for practitioners to apply such theories in their writing.

Research into spectator responses and the site of the audience has revealed an alarming ignorance of the screenplay medium and the role of the screenwriter in facilitating audience engagement in response studies. I argue that the screenplay is an effective tool for the exploration of such theories. While it is acknowledged that conventional audience response studies are valid, the range of practices that the screenplay encompasses also present their own valid sub-field of research. The conclusions of this practice support the belief that readers' responses have a place in the field of screenwriting, but that the screenplay can also play a significant role in the field of response studies because of the consideration given, not only to

readers of scripts, but also to the spectators of cinema. I propose that this is a valuable area of research for the scholar and practitioner alike, and one that can help unveil new and exciting approaches to the craft of screenwriting.

This chapter also aimed to deconstruct the final stage of the writing *At the Crossing*, specifically, the writing of a screenplay while situated in an ‘industry facing’ context. To achieve this, an industrial standard schedule and a budget breakdown were developed in order to present a logistical framework from which to begin revising the final drafts of the script. The last section of this exploration demonstrated in what way the story was informed by these logistics, revealing how various scenes were rewritten so as to yield the most producible screenplay possible without sacrificing the characters and overall story beats of the script. In many instances, the scenes were radically reduced or rewritten altogether in order to recycle previously used locations or characters.

The adoption of an ‘industry facing’ mode of writing, where writers must consider conformist approaches to the craft as well as industrial logistics, not only changes how we write the screenplay, but it affects our perception of the document as an artistic medium in the wider culture of screenwriting practice. Veteran Hollywood screenwriter Paul Schrader, the writer of *Taxi Driver* (Scorcese 1976) and *Raging Bull* (Scorcese 1980), challenges the artistic merit of the script when he states:

If I wanted to be *just* a writer, I could be just a writer very easily. I am not a writer. I am a screen writer, which is half a filmmaker... If I wanted to be a writer, I would not be writing screenplays, that’s for sure.

I wanted to be a filmmaker; therefore, I *can* write screenplays. If you want to make a good living, you *can* be that bastardized thing called the screenwriter. But it is *not* an art form, because screenplays are not works of art. They are invitations to others to collaborate on a work of art, but they are in themselves works of art. (Schrader, cited in Hamilton 1990).

Schrader’s statement suggests that the relationship of the cinema to the screenplay text compromises its artistic status as a standalone literary document. It is arguable that the screenplay’s purpose changes in this setting from that of a literary work to a technical document. Its function changes from one trying to convey the best possible screen story, to the most producible story possible. I argue then that the screenplay is not strictly a literary or technical craft, but both. The metaphor of the architect designing a blueprint for a house, one

that is commonly challenged by screenwriting scholars, finds an appropriate place in this avenue of research.

Researching this mode of screenwriting can reveal the ways in which writers are influenced by the various factors of a film production, both in terms of how the screenplay is formatted and presented, but also in the way the story and narratological aspects of the script are revised. In a strict sense, this deconstruction involves an understanding of the ways in which practitioners engage with screenplay texts, and this avenue of research can also bring to the forefront the ways in which screenplays are read by different readers. However, the implied reader of screenwriting is not a static idea; rather, it is continuously evolving with changing consumption trends. New and innovative practices in filmmaking are affecting the way we consider the script in the production of a film, but also in the way we approach the writing of it. As consumers change their engagement with the text, be it a screenplay or a completed film, the writer must also reconsider the implied reader and spectator to include a wider array of members within the production pipeline. Then, if necessary, writers can adapt their approaches accordingly to embrace new technologies and techniques in film production to communicate their work better to these readers.

Conclusion

Just as it is impossible to capture the diversity of humanity in one simple statement, so it is impossible to express the totality of what screenplays are capable of. Every screenwriter is unique, and every screenplay is unique (Parker 1999, 213).

Throughout this thesis, I have aimed to satisfy the belief, stemming from my own experiences as a screenwriting practitioner, that so-called “screenwork” (Parker 1999, 213) can come in a variety of forms, not just the typical examples found in academic texts and screenwriting manuals. Investigating these alternative forms helped to answer my primary research question; what are the unspoken contributions of the screenwriter in a production setting? I achieved this aim by providing, not just industrial case studies, but first-hand accounts of the act of writing for the screen in an ‘industry facing’ setting. The result is a body of work that contributes to a more perfect deconstruction of the role of the writer and the screenplay text itself in the wider film production landscape.

In Chapter one, I provided a detailed account of the role of the writer during the earliest periods of the craft, when the screen idea was communicated using a scenario. The chapter placed a focus on the main practitioners of the time to highlight their backgrounds in other media and their expanded roles in film productions as well. By providing a detailed timeline of the evolution of the craft, I was also able to demonstrate the relationship between production technologies and the craft of screenwriting and, in particular, the way this rich heritage of multimedia was slowly phased out in favour of a Fordist model of production. These shifts in production relegated the screenwriter to the earliest stages of the film’s development and their role to that of a typist. In the second part of the chapter, I investigated the use of multimodal storytelling and alternative digital techniques in the creation of a screen idea. I used the crowdfunding platforms, Kickstarter and Indiegogo, to highlight the need for a competence in other communications techniques so as to best impart the screen idea to a contemporary implied reader. I used *Still Life*, a short film which I wrote and produced early in my research as a case study to demonstrate how my own role as the screenwriter was greatly enhanced in the production. In this production, I played a significant role in pitching the project to film financiers by developing a variety of multimedia content which would communicate the screen potential of this idea to online audiences using a crowdfunding platform called *Indiegogo*. The process required the application of various multimedia, such as video and imagery, and highlights the necessity of such a skillset in contemporary independent film production practices when pitching and fundraising a project.

It is in the nature of every screenwriter, even a hobbyist writer, to think about their writing as a visual medium, a manner of reading that is further reinforced by the formatting conventions of the document. The application of multimodal storytelling devices in the creation of a screenplay, or the use of diverse digital technologies in contemporary practice, is commonly seen as residing outside the remit of the screenwriter who might wish instead to collaborate with a storyboard artist or a cinematographer in order to translate the screen potential of the story onto the page. Despite the fact that the goal of all of these processes is to communicate the screen idea better, it is arguably counterproductive than to exclude the screenwriter from engaging in these practices.

In chapter two, I provided three contemporary industrial case studies, each of which represent different stages of the independent filmmaking spectrum. The first case study, *Lore*, demonstrated the role that screenwriter Robin Mukherjee played in the earliest stages of the film's development. In my interview with Mukherjee, he revealed the role he played in developing documentation that aided in funding applications for Scottish Screen, as well as detailing his collaboration with the film's director, Cate Shortland, later in the production. The second case study, *Dead Man's Burden*, provided insight into smaller productions, and the ways in which the screenwriter is situated within these productions. In this example, director Jared Moshe was also the writer and producer of the film and this offered a perspective on the writing process which differed from Hollywood and other mainstream sectors. The third case study, *The Mummy*, provided insight into the role of the screenwriter, Dylan Kussman, on the set of a Hollywood blockbuster. In his interview, Kussman discussed his regular engagement with the various implied readers on a production, such as executive producers, the director, other screenwriters, in this case Christopher McQuarrie and the stars of the film, notably Tom Cruise. Kussman's engagement with these other practitioners greatly affected his process as a writer.

A common depiction of the screenwriter in craft manuals is that of a storyteller, residing in the pre-funding stages of a film production. With these interviews, I was able to show that this is not strictly the case and that the responsibilities of the writer can be wide-ranging and different from case to case. My interview with Jared Moshe revealed how the writing of a screenplay is heavily integrated with the overall model of production. This was something that was confirmed through the development of *At the Crossing*. My interview with Robin Mukherjee highlighted that the writer remains an integral part of the film's development throughout the pre-production process, in order to help secure funding, as well as facilitating a shift in creative leadership from writer to incoming director. This exchange requires a strong

collaboration between writer and director so as to promote the creative input of the director in the final rewrites before filming commences. It can benefit the screenwriter to view themselves as an active member of the production crew, a filmmaker no less.

Collectively, these case studies revealed how active the screenwriter can be in different film productions, whether they are developers of the screen idea, a producer, director or as aides to the practitioners who seek to realise the words of the page to the screen. The interviews demonstrate that in each of these scenarios, the writer must consider their implied reader or spectator and it is this consideration that serves as their greatest influence on the craft of writing for the screen.

Chapter three is a detailed analysis of the conception, writing and rewriting of an original feature-length academic screenplay, *At the Crossing*, which was written to explore how the creative process is influenced by my understanding of the implied reader of screenplays in screenwriting culture. The chapter explained the ways in which my use of multimodal tools, such as imagery and video, was employed in the crafting of the story, as well as to convey the screen idea to a reader. The second stage of the chapter further explains the impact that the creation of industrial documentation, such as schedules and budgets, had on the rewriting process. Though it is acknowledged here that the budgeting and scheduling of a film production is beyond the remit of a screenwriter, it is still an important aspect of the screenwriting process in a production setting. The financial constraints of a production may require the rewriting of different scenes to make them more affordable or to reduce the size of the cast by merging characters. The scheduling demands of a film may require a more economical use of locations in order to ensure the most producible script possible. In the case of *At the Crossing*, I employed these documents in this research so as to situate my work in a production setting which then allowed me to explore how my writing may be informed by these outside influences. An initial budget was developed and, based on my interviews with practitioners as well as my own experience as a filmmaker, my final draft of the screenplay was significantly altered in order to satisfy what I considered to be a more achievable budget. This resulted in a more producible screenplay, from a financial and logistical perspective. The writing of the screenplay in this way suggests that a knowledge of how films are made, specifically the daily operations of a production, is essential for the screenwriter. For the purposes of answering the research question of this thesis, such a knowledge demonstrates an important underlying factor which affects the screenwriter's contribution to the successful adaptation of the written word to the screen.

The creative act of writing *At the Crossing*, as well as the development of various supporting production documentation, revealed other ways in which the screenplay and the writing process are affected by the production process of filmmaking. One key finding of this process demonstrated the ways in which the location of the film changed due to the financial restrictions of shooting on location in Chernobyl. Initially, the location surrounding the Chernobyl nuclear plant was crucial to the story and was the focus of much of my research for the early development of the concept. However, the reality of adapting the story for the screen meant that much of these elements, which were considered crucial at the time, were sacrificed in order to make the screenplay more financially producible. During the rewriting, the location changed to a place with no specific ties to any geographical region. In this sense, my role as a storyteller had changed to that of a facilitator of an achievable production blueprint.

One key aspect of the screenplay which remained unchanged by the production schedule and budget was the depiction of the main protagonists, Sofiya and Olena. While the more practical and mechanical aspects of the story were open to revision, in order to keep the budget of the potential production down, the core characteristics of Sofiya and Olena remained the same. The actions that they had to undertake throughout the story may have undergone revision, but the underlying revelations of those actions remained intact. As demonstrated in chapter three, successful engagement between an audience and a film can be facilitated at a character level, where the character's actions become a means for the audience to connect with the overall story. In the case of *At the Crossing*, I employed studies of Final Girl theory to craft a story where a reader or spectator would be challenged and engaged by an internal evaluation of their value systems, due to the structural characteristics of the screenplay and the polarising views of the two main characters, Sofiya and Olena.

There are many examples in the mainstream industry of screenwriters leaving productions due to creative differences, and certainly any artistic collaboration can be fraught with conflict when a clash of ideas takes place. This occurrence changed my personal approach to the collaborative act of screenwriting with director Oisín Mac Coille on *Still Life*. I argue that the writer should not and potentially cannot expect to be protective over the practical specifics of the screenplay, such as location, action sequences and other mechanical aspects of film production. Rather, the screenwriter should be open to compromise with the production crew and allow them to offer their own artistic contributions, provided the writer is also able to satisfy the underlying objectives of their writing. In the case of *At the Crossing*, I did not feel that I was losing anything which would be harmful to my story by removing the Chernobyl specific landscape from the final draft. Rather, I remained resolute in the belief that the

screenplay was just as strong, given the fact that the character's underlying traits, goals and arcs remained intact.

Filmmaking is a costly and unpredictable process. Anecdotal evidence from some of the biggest Hollywood blockbusters, such as *Jaws* (Spielberg 1975), suggests that even the best-planned productions can encounter major problems and undergo rewrites. Yet, the writer can ensure that even with the turbulence of a film production affecting the rewriting process, the characters, their story and the techniques used by writers to foster audience engagement with these characters, can remain. Therefore, an understanding of the audience and their responses is essential for the writer. My experience of writing *At the Crossing* revealed that it is our shared understanding of an audience's desires that dictates the rewriting process. In screenwriting scholarship, this general 'knowing' is known as *doxa*.

The discourse of screenwriting is therefore defined in relation to that shared sense of knowing what is right in a given situation, without necessarily knowing why. The individual sense of the way things are done has been internalised, accepted and is now unquestioned. The *doxa* is what disposes the community of screenwriting to make certain judgements and create myths and wise sayings (MacDonald 2013, 23).

The *doxa*, or the shared sense of knowing, is undoubtedly an influence on the writer who seeks to understand their implied reader better, yet, understanding of the *doxa* requires self-reflectivity on the part of the writer. These conclusions reiterate an underlying importance for a self-reflective mode of writing and rewriting, where the screenwriter attempts to dissect their work and understand the processes which inform their craft. I have strived for this approach in my research. These conclusions support that which I have argued for since the beginning of my research, that the implied reader and spectator plays a significant role in informing the development of a screenplay.

The findings also support my view, which stems from my own professional experience as a filmmaker, that the screenwriter is more than just a story plotter, but rather an integral member of the production crew. In this way, the screenwriter is someone who specialises in the communication of that story to the various implied readers of screenwriting, such as producers, directors, actors and all the members of the production pipeline who rely on the screenplay to execute their duties. This method of working is most commonly found in independent sectors of cinema, where experimentation is highly encouraged and, at times, necessary due to production limitations or budgetary constraints. Here, the writer can become a valuable member of the production team.

The Significance of the Research and the Reappraisal of the Screenwriter

During her keynote speech at the *6th Screenwriting Research Network Conference* in 2013, screenwriting scholar Jill Nelmes addressed the evolution of scholarly screenwriting research and her own frustration with the lack of attention given to the screenplay (Nelmes 2014, 305). Ironically, it was at this same time that I was embarking on my own doctoral research into screenwriting studies and it was this same frustration that drove my studies in this direction.

In the three years since then, the field of screenwriting scholarship has continued to expand. The importance of the academic screenplay as a research artefact in the academy is now widely recognised. The popularity of screenwriting as a profession and a field of study outside of institutions has long been understood, and now the act of screenwriting in video games, for one, is an area of increased interest among screenwriting scholars.²³ It is one example of how screenwriting studies is gaining further momentum. Throughout my own critical research, I have grown frustrated by some outdated depictions of the craft which still carry weight in scholarly articles and texts. Film production models, particularly outside of the mainstream, rapidly move and change. Given the integral role of the screenplay in the production process, it is certain that the craft of screenwriting moves at a similar rate. Therefore, practice-led research into the screenplay can illuminate studies of game design, film production and other screen work and provide more up-to-date case studies for scholars to learn from.

Studies of reader's response and the implied reader are already established in literary research but they have yet to translate into screenwriting, as almost no literature on the subject acknowledge the screenplay text as a potential avenue for research. The reasons for this can be linked to one of the central debates in screenwriting scholarship concerning the screenplay's identity as either a literary artefact or the blueprint of a film. This discussion also encompasses other areas of research, particularly the screenplay's status as a complete or incomplete text. The screenplay is conventionally seen in industrial sectors as the first stage of the development of a film and a document to be discarded in favour of the completed film. Prolific filmmakers, such as Alfred Hitchcock and Francis Ford Coppola, have highlighted the importance of the screenplay in the film production process. Other filmmakers, such as Quentin Tarantino and Aaron Sorkin have become famous more for their work as writers than for their final films. The screenplay is granted a significant status in the industry but its role is nonetheless

²³ Michael Wellenreiter acknowledges this growing interest in his publication *Screenwriting and Authorial Control in Narrative Video Games* (2015).

considered subservient to the completed film. Despite this, many academic screenwriting departments exist as part of larger creative writing schools, English departments or other areas of literary studies. Rarely, does the field of screenwriting sit equally between both an English department and a film production department. As production practices change and audience consumption habits adapt, so too must the screenwriter. Such a shift can have ramifications for how we consider the screenplay as a craft and the ways in which it is situated in scholarship; no longer *just* a creative writing or filmmaking endeavour, but one that sits equally between both crafts.

It is only in recent years that researchers have acknowledged the role of the text in relation to alternative production models and dared to explore underground sectors of film production where lesser known, but equally valid films, are being produced both at the feature and short levels. It is in these sectors where experimentation and innovation take place, particularly in short film production, where filmmakers can be far more flexible in their production model. It is in these pockets of cinema culture where new and exciting avenues of research await the screenplay scholar.

The significance of my research then lies in the first-hand knowledge which was acquired in the practice-led aspects of this thesis. The development of original academic screenplays, as well as short film productions, provided insight into the role of the writer and the state of the screenplay text that conventional critical research, or archival research would not be able to reveal. In combination with industrial case study interviews, the research depicts the screenwriter as a marginalised member of the production team at times (as seen in my own experiences writing and developing *Still Life*). Nevertheless, the research also demonstrates that the screenwriter can play a substantial role throughout the production process. One of the most substantial findings throughout this research is that the objectives of the writer can change significantly throughout the process also and that it is inaccurate to describe the screenwriter as solely an architect of the story. In fact, they can affect how that story will be translated to the screen. The use of multimodal storytelling techniques at the earliest stages of the writing of *At the Crossing*, as well as the development of the *Indiegogo* crowdfunding campaign page for *Still Life*, also reveals the importance of writers adopting a more diverse tool kit of resources in order to communicate their screen idea. The image of the screenwriter sitting in front of a typewriter is a romanticised one that harks back to the days of Dalton Trumbo, however, it is an outdated one. It instils an unhealthy idea that the writer is a typist, when in fact anecdotal, archival and first-hand evidence suggests that the writers can be so much more. Their role in the previsualisation of the screen idea, as an example, is a crucial one that gives the writer

greater agency and can expand the very meaning of what we consider to be the act of writing for the screen. The final significance of the research is that it refutes the harmful notion of the marginalised screenwriter, one who is relegated to the earliest stages of a production, one that is so common in mainstream screenwriting culture. It is for this reason that I continue to privilege Ian W. MacDonald's use of the term 'screen idea'. This substantial change in terminology has the potential to change how we perceive the screenplay in the academy by unbinding the script from the film or television medium and considering it in relation to any screen work. Combined, these shifts in our consideration of the screenplay and the screen idea resituate the writer as an integral member of the fundraising stages, the pre-production and production and even in post-production and marketing. They are nothing less than a filmmaker.

The Limits of the Research and Areas for Future Research

This research is restricted by, what I consider to be, two limitations. The first issue was my inability to begin development of *At the Crossing*, by securing a production company to develop the project, collaborate with a director on future rewrites and begin pitching the concept to investors. As my industrial case studies revealed, the development process, including the fundraising and assembly of a crew, can be a time-consuming process requiring years of personal investment. This fact is further substantiated by my experiences developing *Still Life* early in my research, as well as my past experiences as a filmmaker. Though *Still Life* is a short film, and its production time reflected this fact, it nonetheless confirmed that the development of *At the Crossing*, beyond the conceptual stage, would not be possible in the time needed to complete this research. I had acknowledged that I would not be able to authentically deconstruct an 'industry facing screenplay' due to this issue early in my research and so, to remedy this problem, I created a series of production documentation in the form of budgets and schedules to simulate the circumstances that might inform the rewriting process in an actual film production. The schedule was developed based on my own professional experiences as an assistant director, where one of my roles was to develop call sheets and shoot breakdowns. This gave me a realistic idea of how many scenes could be allotted for each day of the shooting process, as well as the scale of the production crew. The budget was developed based on the length of the hypothetical production schedule and based on information gathered from the interviews conducted and dissected in chapter one.

Another limit to this research was the lack of suitable academic literature to support my development of a practice-led piece of screenwriting, as well as a lack of prior research into

the concept of a digital screenplay. While there is certainly a canon of literature about screenwriting, many of these commercial texts characterise the screenplay as a document with a particular function, rather than a document that, according to Steven Price and Steven Maras, is fluid and susceptible to change as a production moves further into development. Many of these texts focus on the narrative aspects of cinema, rather than on the craft of developing a screenplay into a producible document. Yet, the growing acceptance of screenwriting research in the academy has yielded a selection of rigorous texts which were beneficial to this research. MacDonald's *Screenwriting Poetics and the Screen Idea* and Millard's *Screenwriting in a Digital Age* both played key roles in informing my argument for a broader definition of the screenplay text, one that acknowledges the diverse forms a screen idea can take in its developmental stages. Price's *History of Screenwriting*, and *The Screenplay: Authorship, Theory, Criticism*, played significant roles in understanding the evolution of the screenplay text, as well as the changing perceptions of the screenplay in academic fields. Maras' *Screenwriting: History, Theory and Practice* also played a critical role in challenging the accepted conventions of the craft.

While these issues may have prevented me from conducting further research in the time constraints surrounding this thesis, these limitations will also be addressed in their own right as a separate research project. It is my intention to further explore the subject of screenwriting in a production setting, particularly the development of a screenplay in a feature-length production. The most recent draft of *At the Crossing* will be further developed for the screen and the process of realising this will involve fundraising, recruitment of key production staff, such as a director and a cast of actors. It will also involve location scouting, as well as a breakdown of the post-production process, involving editing, distribution and marketing plans. The development of *At the Crossing*, a feature-length film made with the intention of being released on a commercial platform such as iTunes or a similar online distribution platform, can provide an abundance of research value to not only screenwriting scholars who seek to understand the role of the screenplay and the writer in an independent production process, but to those interested in researching audience responses.

Such a project also provides a platform to investigate the changing demands of the screenwriter in digital models of filmmaking. As I already demonstrated in this thesis, the use of online crowdfunding platforms, such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo, offers filmmakers an alternative method of financing their projects, however, my own experiences developing and managing the crowdfunding campaign for *Still Life* also revealed the unspoken role the screenwriter can play in communicating the screen idea to potential backers. This task is

something that screenwriters already undertake in traditional filmmaking models, as evidenced in my interviews with Robin Mukherjee and Jared Moshe, both of whom had to develop writers' statements and other similar documentation to pitch their screen ideas to potential financiers on behalf of the production team.

Finally, research into 'digital screenwriting', that is the use of digital technologies in the creation and communication of a screen idea, can also extend beyond the pre-production stages and the writer can employ digital technologies to help facilitate a smoother production, where daily on-set rewrites may be necessary. The use of digital screenplays, rather than hard copy scripts in a production, can also call into question the very notion of what constitutes a script draft, as well as how production teams collaborate on the development of a script (by using networking technologies). Finally, a digital screenplay can change the ways in which we conventionally read a screenplay and, in turn, affect the strict formatting guidelines to which screenplays have for so long had to adhere.

The significance of this research is linked to the way we consider the screenwriter and the script as both a creative writing artefact and a technical production document. The findings of this thesis can help to readdress the role of the writer in these productions and better understand their contributions to a production. In screenwriting scholarship, there is a focus among researchers to discuss commercial screenwriting case studies, such as Hitchcock and his relationship with screenwriter Joseph Stefano. These case studies can give a fascinating insight into Hollywood and mainstream production environments, but such case studies do not reflect the majority of filmmaking enterprises, such as those found in the underground sectors of cinema. Such discourses also tend to place the screenwriter at the earliest stages of a film's production in the story development stages and fails to acknowledge the immense contributions that screenwriters make to the production at later stages.

Screenwriting research rarely gives consideration to the collaborative nature of screenwriting beyond the story planning stages. I refer to the collaboration with the implied reader of screenplays such as directors, actors, producers and other key personnel in filmmaking that have influence over the rewriting process of a screenplay. Screenwriting research is also often situated in the field of creative writing studies, and this can distance the craft from that of film production. I argue instead that a healthier approach to screenwriting research, and indeed how we consider pedagogical approaches to screenwriting, is one where the screenwriting student is situated between both a creative writing discipline and that of an 'industry facing' one such as film production studies. It is this lack of symbiosis between both fields, as well as a focus on commercial and mainstream working habits, which I believe has

contributed to such a misunderstanding about the actual roles of writers in underground and independent film productions. It has been the objective of this thesis to help change the perception of filmmakers and scholars alike as to the unseen contributions of the screenwriter and the enhanced role they so often play in the realisation of a film's production.

Another avenue of research that can benefit screenwriting scholarship is the study of empirical audience responses, with a focus on how this data can be applied to the act of screenwriting. As I have highlighted throughout this thesis, the screenwriter is continually overshadowed by the concept of the implied reader and spectator. But to make any claim of reader and audience response is negligent without first acknowledging that such claims are theoretical. I have discussed the importance of consumers and their relationship to the script, time and again, in this thesis. I have highlighted the ways the screenwriter is expected to confront their implied reader and eventual spectator during the development of their screen idea, but paradoxically how they are unable to draw on empirical data to do so.

The advent of metadata collection sites such as *Metacritic* (metacritic.com) and *The Internet Movie Database* (IMDB.com) have provided the practitioner with a solution to this gap in knowledge. These sites allow audiences to vote, comment, rate and review films, and IMDB offers paying customers access to even more statistical information. Studios such as Netflix and Amazon have allowed the metadata associated with their streamed content to inform content creation. Recently, Amazon Video launched their own version of the American television network 'pilot season', where customers can vote on what pilots should be ordered for the coming season. Using the tagline, "help choose the next Amazon Original Series" (Amazon Video n.d.), Amazon demonstrates the power and reliability of such tools in the creation of content.

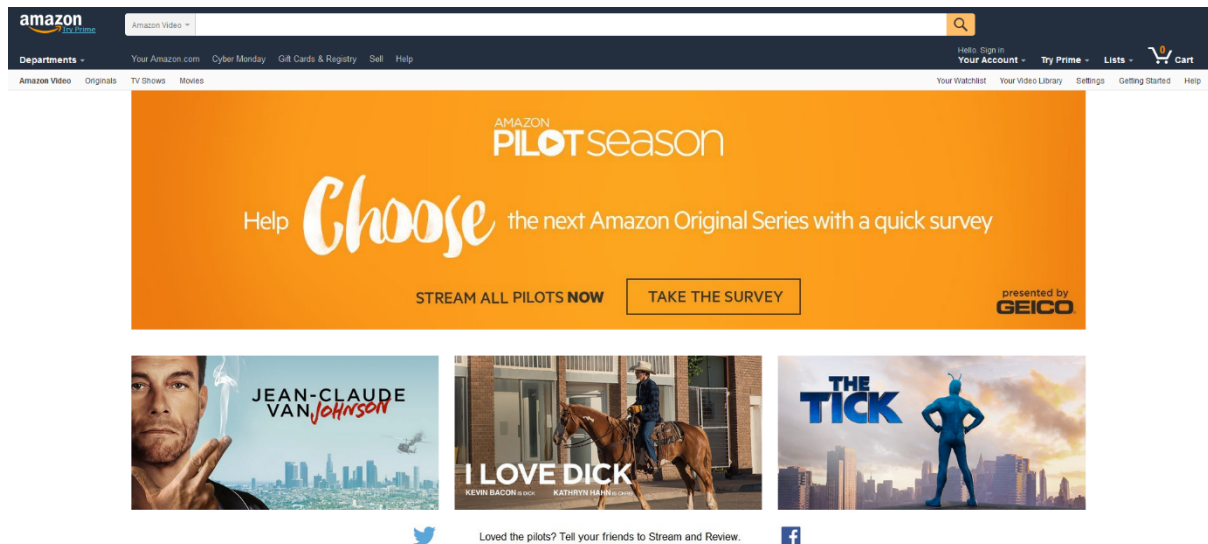


Figure 17. An advert for Amazon Video Pilot Season.

Previous systems such as the Nielson rating system, where spectators across America are chosen to represent large-scale viewing habits, are flawed because of their sample size, while Amazon can bypass the sampling method entirely, drawing data from every viewer individually. This data can encompass what shows people watch, how long they watch for at a time and to which genres they gravitate towards. It allows for a more accurate model of the audience than what prior systems allowed. With such a valuable resource at the disposal of practitioners, it would seem the implied reader or spectator will be further unmasked over the coming years.

The Future of the Craft

The exciting developments in the field of screenwriting, as well as the greater acceptance of practice-led research among institutions which Nelmes highlighted in her keynote speech (2014), represents a new approach for scholars seeking to better understand the complexity of the craft of screenwriting, as well as the role that the screenwriter plays in the production of a film. While the craft of screenwriting has continued to evolve into the digital age of cinema, much of the perceptions of screenwriting in the wider cinema culture have failed to evolve as well. In the academy, many scholars are discussing the exciting future of the craft, as well as its place in humanities research.

Price, in *A History of the Screenplay*, dedicates a chapter to the future of the craft. Price makes clear that the script is “inextricable from the mode of production” (2013, 221), acknowledges these changing production methods and further suggests that these new modes

have “enabled an explosion of different possibilities, which call into question the very purpose and existence of the screenplay as a pre-production document” (2013, 221). He gives examples of screenplays that break the so-called rules of screenwriting that I have been critical of in previous chapters and demonstrates that the lines between the pre-production, production, and post-production stages are blurring together in ways that allow the screenplay to take a more “central” role (2013, 224). Price’s exploration of independent and avant-garde productions also permits the possibility of any production document to become a functioning screenplay text:

Considered strictly in this context, such projects become self-selectingly marginal to studies of the relationships between screenwriting and industry, presenting problems similar to those posed by early cinema: a ‘screenplay’ becomes not a definable form but any kind of document, written or otherwise, that provides purely local solutions to creative questions posed in the making of an art work in a different medium (Price 2013, 227).

Such an expansive definition of the screenplay may be problematic from a taxonomy perspective, but it also challenges the norms of the craft and contributes to a changing discourse about how practitioners choose to communicate the screen ideal. The screenwriter’s contributions may come in the form of the written word, but as MacDonald suggests, it doesn’t have to:

The screen idea has multiple possibilities, even if it is written down and specified in great detail by those developing it. It is usually described in writing, in standardised forms, but it need not be. It is usually shared and developed verbally by several people, according to appropriate norms and assumptions, but again it could be developed entirely by one person on their own (MacDonald 2013, 4).

For the scholar, this redefinition opens up a host of equally exciting avenues of research as well and it is argued here that this is a positive advancement in the craft.

A focus on the independent, the avant-garde and underground case studies of cinema are where these exciting avenues of research await. They provide an alternative to the historical case studies of the mainstream that have for so long dominated screenwriting research texts and articles. In these sectors, one can find creative and innovative methods of film production that offer a departure from the longstanding methods of the mainstream industry. It is also worth highlighting that the screenplay does not belong to the realm of cinema and television. It is a document that is now used for many visual based media, such as the video game.

At the annual E3 2016 games convention, Andrew House, the head of Sony Computer Entertainment, credited Sony's "partnerships with the most talented developers and storytellers in our medium" (House cited in Playstation, 2016) as the reason for what he considered to be one of PlayStation's most successful years. In 2014, one of Sony's most successful releases, *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog 2013) was re-enacted by the cast and musicians of the game in a theatrical performance called *The Last of Us: One Night Live* (Naughty Dog 2014). This represents just how popular and widely recognised the characters and narrative of *The Last of Us* are. The link between storytelling and video games dates back to the earliest titles and, today, this is evident in the central role of the narrative in the marketing campaigns of the so-called AAA titles, like *Call of Duty* (Activision, 2003-), *Grand Theft Auto* (Rockstar Games, 1997-) or *Uncharted* (Naughty Dog, 2007-). The story-focused trailers for these games can at times feel more like works of cinema. Screenwriter David S. Goyer wrote two instalments of the *Call of Duty* series and his involvement played a key role in the marketing of the games to a mainstream consumer base. Goyer's name and previous screenwriting credits on *The Dark Knight trilogy* (Nolan 2005-2012) featured in the marketing trailers for the games prior to their release.

The Writers Guild of America West now recognises that role that the screenwriter plays in the popularity of new media, stating that "the technology has now developed to the point that game publishers and developers are turning to WGA writers for more intricate storylines. WGA members are actively seeking to get WGA deals for the writing of video games and to cover writing for the Internet" (wga.org, n.d.). Many of the major development studios now employ screenwriters to maximise player engagement. It is, therefore, prudent that screenwriters expand their own consideration of the craft, just as screenplay scholars expand their own purview of research as well. A nearly endless variety of screenwriting techniques, models and formats await the researcher in these sectors.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Jared Moshe Interview

JF:

Can you describe the development process of *Dead Man's Burden*?

JM:

Sure. Sure, so when I had like a first draft, well the first thing is when I went in writing the script, I knew the story I wanted to tell, but I also knew that westerns are really tough in America, and in American financing you always have to think about what the market will stand and with Westerns the market stands like nothing. So I went about writing it, I went and set up a series of, you know, it can only have X number of characters, I can only have one day that's going to have extras, I can only have x number of real locations. So I've given myself the desert, I can do many desert shots, that's easy, you turn the camera around and move a hundred yards. But in terms of built locations which cost money, the extras cost money, not only to have but to wardrobe and do right. So all these financing thoughts were in my head from basically day one. And so, when I finished the script, at least the first draft that I was very happy with, I knew this was a project that was totally scalable based on whoever we cast in it basically. If you cast huge names you could get huge money, if you cast bright actors you could just do it. And so, once I had the script I went through it with that mentality, that like, I want to make this movie in the Fall, however much money I can make it for I will make it for, I'm going to try and get the cast I want, but I am not going to stand around and wait for the never ending Hollywood world and waiting and developing and all that.

So I started firing on multiple cylinders at once. I was going after some cast I had really good relationships with, I really thought could be perfect for the role. I was going out for crew that I really wanted to work with that I thought could be a good fit, and then I was also going out for financing. At this point I had one investor, because I'm a producer, I have a producer background. I had one producer that I had worked with before which had been pretty successful, you know, he had gotten his money back, and he was willing to throw about a third of 200k into the budget, whatever that is, 60,000. So he was like, if you can keep it at 200,000 I'll give you a third of your budget. So I sort of went in saying I'm a third financed.

He knew at that level he could get it back. So I knew I had that money, and if I could raise more going after bigger financiers that's great, I could use that and build from there. So I was kind of moving on multiple fronts at the same time.

And then I found another financier who would come in for another 50,000, and that got us mostly through production if we needed it. She was an indie, let's say a wealthy Texas woman who likes financing indie films. And then I went after trying to figure out how to reduce the costs, sweat equity type thing. So we went after post deals, and went after publicist houses, even though I had no clue at this point what my post process was going to be. I started basically contacted everyone I knew in the post world saying what kind of deals can you give, what sweat equity deals can you give. So basically I had all these different things going on and as I would find an element, I would start revising the script based on that element. So for example, we attached our two lead actors, and then I did a pass writing to their strengths, knowing how David acted, the subtlety of his performance, things I knew I could pull out from the script to strengthen that. Then, same thing, we got a post deal that ensured I could shoot on film, so now I budgeted to shoot on film. I location scouted, we went to New Mexico and we location scouted. Finding that location involved another rewrite, writing around that location that we were shooting in. We were attaching crew and all this time we were going after financing, and we had about 115,000 roughly, and then we found a few more with our post deal that could get us to the 200 level. It was mostly people who were interested in getting their foot in the film world, and some of them have gone onto invest in other projects, and some of them are like, I don't really want to do this. But the key thing is that everything was moving concurrently. We set this date that we were going to shoot in the fall, and everything was moving towards that date, and that date was one thing we had locked in stone.

JF:

What kind of documentation did you have for the fundraising? Were you presenting a sample draft or a final draft?

JM:

Those drafts are constantly changing, and what you finance your movie on is very rarely what you end up shooting. I mean, the general stories are there, but small details are changing. You know, for investors, it's showing that you have a smart financing plan, you present a business plan. They want to know that you know what the hell you're going to be doing with your money. You know where it's spent and where it's not going to be spent. That's the key. They

want to see the script, and the business plan, and the budget. The budget, that's always changing but we knew what the 200,000 level, the 500,000 level and I think we even had a million dollar budget, but we were presenting it very clearly, this is the business plan, this is the distribution plan, and this is how we're going to deal with it.

JF:

Was \$200,000 enough for your vision of the film?

JM:

Oh god no. It was and it wasn't. You get one take sometimes. There was no contingency day. If something went wrong, things did go wrong, the day it happened to, our day off, there was a massive rain storm, and we couldn't go up this two mile dirt road. We could drive up, but after the storm we couldn't get up there unless we walked it. Another production would figure out a way to spend money, but we couldn't we had to get up that hill to keep rolling by 9am. And I'm like, let's start walking guys. You have no luxuries when you have no money. You have to know what you are sacrificing, and what sacrifices you are willing to make.

JF:

Would the production have benefited from a larger budget?

JM:

I would have loved an extra 50,000. But I also think the more money you have it can get you into extra problems. A hundred grand would have been great, the strings attached wouldn't have been a problem. An extra day or two would have been fantastic, being able to get one or two extra setups. If we had gone out of that low low budget range, it would have been a tougher film, it would have been harder to get what we wanted, that really rough feel, because we were all living it. I think when it comes to how much money you want to make your movie for, you have to come to think about what the budget – yeah you're getting paid more, which is totally legit, but take away the money you're making, and think purely about the product, more money isn't going to... what is the more money giving you.

JF:

How did the practicalities of making the film inform your writing, as opposed to writing a speculative script?

JM:

The big difference between writing a spec and writing something that you're going to direct, is when writing a spec, you have to write something that's basically perfect, that you can sell. And your main purpose is to sell it and get it on its way. When you're writing something that you're going to make, you're trying to figure out how you're going to convey it, and the project isn't just the script. So, it's a freedom to not be perfect when you send it. When you're directing it, you're selling people on you and your package, and everyone knows that its going to change, it's going to get better, and it's going to develop. That's part of the process. There's an expectation that will happen, whereas with a spec, it's gotta be perfect. People are always looking for reasons to say no. I always think of action scenes, any type of action scene is a good way to think about it. If you're going to sell a spec, you're going to want to write this cool, awesome, amazing action scene. You're going to want to think it through, and get all the details, and you're going to make this thing that's going to have all the twists and turns. If you're going to make a film, let's get whatever the beats of the action scene are. What are the emotional beats of this action scene, what are the turning points? And then, that scene will be changed like six time over the course of things. That's the entire script in a little bit. You are involved in the process the whole time, so as a writer you have a freedom to not stress some of the small stuff. Like, they were scenes in my first draft that aren't in the movie, and there are a lot of scenes towards the end of the movie that were never in my first draft, because I knew how Wade kills Hack. I knew it was going to happen, I had absolutely no idea how it was going to happen in terms of a physical way, in that I didn't know where I was going to be shooting.

JF:

Describe the distribution process?

JM:

It was picked up by LFF, Los Angeles Film Festival.... The distributors like Westerns. Some people think that the reason distributors like Westerns is because Wall-Mart likes Westerns. So there's a small baseline there that actually helps but where these things have problems is internationally, where its very tough to get international distribution.

For us, when we were looking at different options, we kept a little bit of reserve to see if we wanted to do a self release, and then we looked at the terms of the deal to see what the terms were, did we want to go with the small distributor or the theatrical distributor who could pay

us more up front and really give us a straight video deal. We chose cinedigm because we really liked their ancillaries, their ability to do ancillaries.

So for us it was really once the film premiered and got good reviews, how do we get an audience, and the hardest part about a Western is our audience isn't the most tech savvy audience. Our audience tends to be older male, they watch stuff on tv, they still rent movies, so we really wanted a distributor who understood that and could get us to those markets. And our distributor really understood this and did a really good job of that. But it's one of those things, where you're trying to figure out how to get your film out, as a filmmaker your job is to think outside the box, because distributors have so many films that they just try to pump through their systems, that you need to figure out how to reach the audience that is best for your film.

JF:

Had you ever considered self distribution, such as digital or online distribution?

JM:

I think they're great. If you talk to any of these digital distributors, they can tell you that they can get your film onto the system for a very cheap price, but noones going to see it if you don't have a marketing plan. Because the truth of the matter is that there's a lot of stuff out there now, and you need to figure out how to get above the noise.

I think it's great. I've done self-distribution on films I've produced. We've gotten brand sponsorship on the theatrical release and that pushed to ancillaries, but I never done *just* the 'lets put something up on iTunes'. I know people who've done that, but unless you've got someone super dedicated, and someone who knows how to use social-media and the interwebs, to get people awareness. Yeah your film is on iTunes, but how are people going to know your film is on iTunes. How are they going to get to it? Netflix is doing less and less film now, they're focusing on TV. They're not really going after Indies anymore. iTunes is really where you have to focus.

JF:

Can you explain the popularity of the Western and how this impacted the production?

JM:

It's a popular genre in America, of a certain age group. That age group is not 19-30 year olds, the target for Hollywood, but really it's not about the Western. Hollywood would have no problem releasing Westerns if it was just for an American audience, the problem is the general truth and wisdom is that westerns don't travel overseas. So when you have an entire system, which Hollywood and Indiewood are based on, which is financing out of pre-sales and financing out of your international market places, having a genre that instantly sets you back is an instant no-no.

JF:

Did this impact your production?

JM:

It hit us back in distribution, in finding an international distributor to take it us, was very tough, based on this belief that Westerns can't sell, or sell well enough. I think it's always changing a little bit, everything's true until it's not true, but ya it was harder to find distribution, it was harder in trying to get the budget.

JF:

What was the casting process like?

JM:

When we were auditioning for that role, I must have seen about 50 women, and Claire was in Australia and her agent sent in a scene and it was fantastic. We talked to her and she understood what we were trying to do. Then it became about how do we get her to America to shoot this. We moved mountains to get her a work visa so she could come to America, and it was off this film then that she got her agent. We shot in October 2011, and she went to L.A. for pilot season after that, and that's when she booked Nashville.

JF:

Would Claire's name have carried weight by that point?

JM:

It carried weight, but not that much weight. It wasn't huge. Like TV stars aren't huge.

JF:

You had Richard Riehle though. He is a recognisable actor.

JM:

Ya, he's a person you recognize, but his name doesn't generate the heat that... they're not people who are going to get you on magazine covers. Clare was on Nashville, but that was its first season. No one was selling Nashville on Clare at that point, they were selling it on Connie Britton and Hayden Panetiere. Clare had a following, and that helped with the awareness, but Clare wasn't the talent she is then, or even is now, that her face on a box is going to sell movies.

JF:

Was there pressure to get stars in the film?

JM:

There was. There were some producers who were like, what about going after this name or that name, and there was a point when I had a pretty big name who was interested in one of the roles, but that meant waiting for them to become available and doing some developing with them. So I made a choice. And them coming on-board would have meant me raising some more money, which we could have, but maybe not. And for me it was, okay let's figure out how to make the movie now, or make it later with a bigger name sometime. So I chose that certainty. It was a choice I made though.

JF:

What were the logistics in making this film as a director?

JM:

That was hard, turning off the producer brain was really tough. I knew I had x amount of film, if I went over we didn't have the money. The director can usually say it's someone else's problem to deal with, but I couldn't turn it off. But it gave me the strength to say okay I got what I need I can move on. It forced me to be a little more decisive which is important. Being decisive and having a clear vision are two most important things as a director. Always, when someone comes to you with a question, have an answer. Have an understanding of what you are trying to achieve.

In terms of the entirety of the production, we were shooting in the middle of nowhere in the New Mexico desert. There were storms, rattlesnakes on set, a goat got pneumonia. But we were like, we're making a Western, the weather is going to do what it's going to do, we have to embrace that. It was a very tough, my producer Veronica, did an amazing job on dealing with all the wrenches that were thrown our way. The production challenges were daily. It was a matter of approaching it with the attitude that we have to make this work.

JF:

How different was the script to the completed film?

JM:

There are moments that are different, but the general beats are the same.

JF:

Were you still able to stay true to the initial story that you wanted to tell?

JM:

Yes. But the way I told the story that changed. The way the story started, the way it ended, the fates of the characters that stayed true. But how they characters reached those points, and how that story was told, that definitely changed. That's the thing. You have to be sure of the story, and then you have the freedom to change things, and make everything stronger in the search to refine and make the story stronger, but in terms of making change, the key thing is knowing the story you want to tell and staying true to the vision/

JF:

What did you learn from the overall process?

JM:

I think dealing with the crew, and getting them inspired. Some of them were and some weren't, and I think the people who were inspired really made a big difference. I would built in a little more time, so I had more breathing room. In terms of distribution, I would definitely be more aware of the inner workings of the distribution machine. I think those are the big things. There are so many little things, like the way I would call cut, or convey to an actor.

Appendix B

Robin Mukherjee Interview

JF:

How did you come to be involved in *Lore*?

RM:

I had come across Paul through a company called Salt Eye Films, a Scottish company that I had done some work with. And he links to Peter Fleming who's the head of Salt Eye, who had directed an episode of *Casualty* that I had written, so it's amazing – I always emphasise to my students the artful necessity of networking. The thing about networking is you don't know how it works, it's not about LinkedIn and all that crap really, it's actually about meeting somebody, doing some work, brushing, brushing lightly against what they're up to, and proving yourself to be reliable, dependable, genial, easy to work with, creative, inspiring, and leaving them a good feeling.

So Paul and I had briefly worked on scripts where he was advising Salt Eye as a script editor, and we got on – that's it. So when he was thinking about finding a writer – he had also seen *Dancer in the Wind*, my film set in India, so he had an idea of how I work, and the kinds of things, or some aspects of the range of my work – he thought of me as the writer. He's a very instinctive guy – from that perspective, from that moment, from him sitting in the West end of Glasgow with that book, and the option to adapt it – I don't know why he would of thought of me, but he did and he sent me the book. So I got the book in the post from Paul saying – and I think an email to the agent saying – you know, somebody is sending you a book, will you have a look at it – so I did. I read it, I liked it actually.

It addressed areas I'd been meaning to look at anyway. I've said it before, I've got this German connection. My mother is German, so I know the territory. I've spent a lot of time over there. I felt much closer for many years to my German family than my Indian family just because of the proximity. We've had German people coming over to stay with us, and I spent a summer there – so I knew the territory, and I had some of the same questions that Rachel was dealing with. So I thought I'd give it a go.

All I had to do at that point was prepare a writer's response to reading the book, which we sent to Scottish Screen as it was back then. So Paul just wanted to send a package saying we've got the book, we've got a happy author, we've got a screenwriter, he's enthused, what do you say guys? As an initial conversation with Scottish Screen – it wasn't a cold approach, as he knew

some of the people there. That's the nice thing about those little literary circles in smaller cities – in fact sometimes living outside of London, you can really take advantage of those communities – you're not in a satellite floating on the edge of the Universe, it has its own energy.

Scottish Screen liked it. I did a very personal statement, saying that I didn't really want to adapt anything as I had enough to do, but I was gripped by the book, and I felt that I could relate and it resonated with me. So SS were very happy with that, and I believe after that they asked for a pitch, a proposal document – so that's where the work started.

Then Paul and I in the first instance, got together, he came down to London, we stayed with a friend of his, and what we did was walked and walked around London talking about the sorts of things in the book that we thought appealed to us and resonated to us – not specific things, but the things that we felt buzzed with the zeitgeist. For instance, I remember kicked a stone, and saying "I think this a story about a journey to a place that no longer exists." which I've subsequently found it is an advanced form of nostalgia. You remember a place, you remember a time that never happened. But when I said it, I remember we both stopped and thought, you know that is so achingly sad, and so achingly pertinent to all of us. We are all looking for a place. When you make a statement like that you kind of go f***. It can be equated to a shamanistic thing, not a supernatural thing, you know when you are tapping into very deep levels of human concern, and when you are, you know that people are going to respond to it instantly, and I think it is part of our job as writers to be attune to that, that we're not just writing about things that interest us, we're saying something that resonates with us in a much broader way.

The other thing was idealism, because what Lore the character is finding herself, is that the ideology she was brought up to believe in had a darker side. Our thesis was having an ideal is a great thing, but the moment you try to impose it on others it becomes a fascistic thing.

We were looking at the pathology of dogma, and we felt that politically at that time there wasn't much outside of North Korea, there wasn't much fascistic totalitarian, there was plenty of religious totalitarian forces spread, it's become more obvious – so at least those two ideas were powerful, and therefore we could – there was a third one too – that moment when you realise your parents can seriously, seriously, fuck up. That's it. We were dealing with the ideas, and we prepared a document that prepared that. I didn't have to plot it because we were taking it from the book, and we sent that to SS and they said great, we left it to their deliberative process for which seemed like forever, and it was about a year before they finally said here is some development money.

I had some money then to write a script, I wrote a couple of drafts, can't remember how many, three, four, but right from the start it was working, and as it began to mature, he looked for a director, and found that Cate was perfect for it. Of course Cate brings her own ways of doing things and this effects the way scripts move from that point on – one thing you know is that she's very much in the moment, she'll find things, she loves that spontaneous. When you're out there on the road, and you don't know what the performances are going to be. So essentially the emphasis shifts to providing a foundation – you're not going to write every snail, every shard of light.

So then Cate and I, and Paul got together to do research, well there'd been research all the time, we'd read about Germany, the Holocaust. In Germany we went to a concentration camp. We'd talked to Holocaust survivors, people who had been Nazis. One of them showed us photographs of when he was a Nazi – he said he really loved Goebbels. I thought that was interesting because we have an unspeakable adherence for those people, it's impossible to think that we could admire him – but I can try to get into the head of someone who looks around from where they are and picks the wrong idols. And then, that's when the trouble started really, because we had some of the funding, but not all of the funding – the creative parts is the fun bit and the easy bit, but the funding is hard. The banking collapse meant that suddenly money that was there wasn't there, and eventually somehow, suddenly it was there in place. Cate brought Australian money, but she also brought the composer and the DOP and they were in that position of just breaking out of Australia. People compare Max to Hans Zimmer, and Adam is in True Detective. We had them for Lore, which was fantastic. They brought that Aussie enthusiasm. We had German's backing us up from that side. We got Memento and Music Box. As soon as those guys were involved, we were a go. So long as they don't get burned, they want to make stuff that they enjoy, which is essential.

JF:

How long did it take from the initial approach by the producer to first day of principle photography?

RM:

Seven years.

JF:

Really? Had other avenues of funding been considered, such as crowdfunding?

RM:

I like the idea of lots and lots of people giving a little bit. It amounts to something. Creatively it's risky, we all hate the studio executives who give notes, but those people are good because you then have to justify why you're doing something.

But the seven years thing, two years was lost due to the financial collapse, but five years was about how long it took really. So far as the payment goes, forget the royalties, the producer's profits, but so long as people get their basic fee, it's fine. People think we're minting it, they see what Cruise makes and they think if that's what the actor makes, imagine what the writer makes. We can make a decent senior manager wage with bonuses, but there are worse ways to make a living.

JF:

What was it like collaborating with a writer who is also director? Was there a noticeable shift in your roles?

RM:

Yeah there was a transition. The development of ideas with Paul then shifted in the causation between myself and Cate and we talked it through, spent time together, went through the details, draft after draft while we were having our conversation. Then it was up to her to do her shooting script and her director's draft and she went off to do that. She went off to locations, and talking to the actors, who brought their own ideas, it was a very organic process, and in the end of it the various parties who had a creative input had a debrief – we questioned some of the things in the film, for example, neither Rachel nor I had seen the Father as being so brutal, animalistic, and Cate said that the actor came along with that, when they thought about it, it was the only choice. In the greater context, the ambiguity of a dignified father, created a grey zone where he wasn't part of it, and then you ask questions about partial complicity, and then actually it starts to get muddled. And the feeling was that if we were going to tell the one story once, then we would need that character epitomising a kind of undignified brutality. Lots of creative movements. The last thing you want is a director just to direct the script, it's an organic thing, and everyone has a hand in it.

JF:

Do you find that screenwriter is welcome on set? Do you go on set?

RM:

It depends on the people I'm working with. If it's a really intense and focused feature film, its best to keep away. Just don't be there, don't be a drag. For TV I think it's a courtesy to show up and people seem to appreciate it. But you don't overstay your welcome. I've had fantastic times on sets. When I was on Casualty we were all going out together, like a family.

JF:

Do you find that your knowledge of the production, the logistics of the production informs your writing?

RM:

It does because you are working with their creative energy, an actor, and also your confidence in a director allows you to put in nuances that maybe another director might not get. Right now I've written dialogue and I've split up the sentences for dramatic effect, but I've found that the actor's reading of it didn't work so I've been breaking up the full stops. So you do that.

JF:

Can you talk about the ethical responsibilities of writing a story such as *Lore*:

RM:

If you're going to set it somewhere then it has to be part of a story. It's a false dichotomy, choosing between following the story, and following the truth of the world, one would hope they should be the same thing. I think like an actor, you can do your best to inhabit the world. I wrote something in Russia where the husband and wife are talking about how the wife had given details to the Soviet Union to keep them off their back, and he was shocked because he didn't know that. Apparently when they were shooting that the crew were all in tears, because nobody had caught that moment of their history so well. You can do all this work, but go live with Eskimos, eat some fish – you can do it.

JF:

How present is your implied spectator when you are writing?

RM:

I think they are the medium, the page you are writing on. They are the marble you are chipping. You work with imagination, and with your audience's imagination, and their feelings and sensibilities, and associations and attention, and one has to be aware of that constantly. I've had a muddled conversation with people about this where the problem with their writing was that they never thought anyone was going to see it. You're not just writing something on a piece of paper, you're creating a game plan. The actual writing is in the imagination of the participant. I've showed them some screenplays, a Christopher Nolan screenplay. He knows exactly where his audience is, in terms of suspension and suspense. He's aware of what his audience needs at any point in time. So yes I would say they are essential to the process.

JF:

Can you talk about the visual pitch of *Combat Kids* and how that benefitted the production?

RM:

We pitched previously and we showed children pages of the book and had a vox pop of kids saying how much they loved the book. I thought it was a brilliant idea. There's a moment when you get the creative team when you suddenly can see it happening and I'm always excited when people say they can see it – because what they mean is that it has acquired a sense of the inevitable. That's what you want, that's what you are pitching is a sense of inevitability, challenging people to not get in the way. You're not asking to help, you're asking to not get in the way, to get on board. I don't mean to say that in a salesman way, that actually happens. Suddenly people feel excited about a project, it's lovely. However good it is, however strongly argued, if you don't get a sense of inevitability to see it, it'll never happen. They're never going to make it. Whatever works. Whatever can add to the weight of it. I would use it again if it was appropriate. I'm a bit of a purist, I believe the work is on the page.

JF:

Can you talk about narrative structure and how it informs your work?

RM:

I am suspicious of structures that have been extrapolated from pieces of work, this technique of what makes great movies work and then extrapolating that and saying that's how all films should be made. I think there's a danger of rules and rigidity. I addressed structure in the book. I feel it's very important, but I wanted to find a natural approach to it. There is a structure,

but it's an echo of structure that's in everything. The simplest paradigm is the single action. An action is taken because somebody wants it because it's lacking and they do something to get it. I tried to make the case for it. I had written quite a lot to attack, but didn't want to introduce negativity or start an argument. Just make my own case. I was sorely tempted to challenge some of the script gurus who do a disservice to the craft of writing, and the greatest disservice is that they convince writers that they don't know how to write. All those people who seek to write, explore their impulses of why they want to write, and they will find their rules in that. But this idea of I know how to write you don't pay me – I think that's a really false premise. The way I write, in a way sometimes I do break it up into acts if I'm having problems with it, but if you get a sense of flowing energy, you don't need to do a strategy for it, because you either feel its cooking or its not.

Appendix C

Oisín Mac Coille Interview

JF:

Having collaborated on *Still Life* together, I'd like to get your view of the project from the early days, right up until we completed the editing process.

OM:

Well this film is different as well in a sense because we approached it from two different angles. When we first started, we had a producer on board, and you could just worry about the story, I could just worry about visualising that story, and Ruth just had to worry about Character. When we lost our producer, and we all had to step in to that role, then the vision became slightly muddled, because we had to make the best possible story, but we also had to bear in mind the production aspects which we didn't have to originally. So if we say, from the first time we sat down to discuss this, nearly eighteen months ago, we approached it purely just from a writer, actor, director point of view, because we had a producer, and we didn't have to worry about logistical stuff, to a degree. But when we lost our producer we had to go back to the drawing board, and we lost a bit of time. I think we would have had the film made much sooner, if we hadn't lost our producer, and I think that goes without saying. But I think when we lost the producer, it set us back two or three months and we had to step in and pick up the work our producer had done. We lost certain aspects that the producer had brought with her to this. We had to go back in terms of casting and look at that, but also having to shoot in Cork, we had to look at that again in terms of cost, because of what we lost with the producer. So I think what I'm trying to say is, you are talking about how filmmaking is unique at different strands, and I think our film was unique again to our strand, because of how we had to approach it, because of multiple starting points.

But once we started rolling the main body of production, I think the fact that yourself, myself and Ruth knew each other and trusted each other, made the collaboration process all the more easier. I didn't have to do too much with story because we had had our discussions, we knew where we wanted the story to go, we had a beginning middle and end. It didn't have the ambiguous ending that a lot of short films have, and we were both adamant that it wouldn't have that. But again, I was purely able to concentrate on the visuals of it, it was purely the logistical work that we needed to figure out after we lost the producer.

JF:

Did you find your role as a director changing during the process?

OM:

I'd like to think not. I'd like to think when I approach any project, unless of course I'm writing it myself, but if I'm approaching a project, I'm not a scriptwriter. I know that. If there's story points or plot points that I don't think are working, then I'll approach the screenwriter and say this is going to be hard to convey on the screen, could we rewrite it a certain way? So I'm probably not a scriptwriter, but I'm more a story writer, I find the story points that don't work and I try to rework them and make them shootable on the budget that we already have.

JF:

Has there ever been a time when you've found yourself bridging those roles?

OM:

Perhaps with someone less experienced. There was one script I did where the writer was just out of college. He wrote a really good story, but the script was not shootable. If we had three or four hundred euros in our budget we were lucky. We tried to get the writer to get the story they had in their head down to the resources that we had available to us – and we managed to do it. It worked out well. A writer just needs paper to realise their idea. Now that's just a writer. There's no limits to what they can write down. And then I'm writing a script where the opening scene is a spaceship coming down to earth, and I'm thinking, how am I supposed to shoot this on a zero budget. Oh well that's the director's problem. That's the producer's problem. So a lot of writers just write whatever they want down on paper and leave it to someone else to get that made. The way I try to approach it is that we're all trying to tell the one story, but from different aspects of a storyteller.

JF:

You mention budgets. You're coming to it from the perspective that a lot of films are written to be made. Is this the case?

OM:

At the same time, I'm not overly concerned about budget. I know if I go to my producer and say, I need to build a practical spaceship, they're going to say well you can't have the actor you

have in mind because he's too expensive. So at the end of the day, when I sit down to read a script, budget is always there. I know it shouldn't be, but you can't help but think about how this is going to affect our budget, and it could impact our story.

JF:

How do you think that impacts your ability as a director?

OM:

I suppose it impacts the choice of film I'm trying to make. I wouldn't go and make that spaceship movie for example, as I know it would hamper my budget, I would lean more towards a human story, that wouldn't have any special effects, that wouldn't have any major set pieces as such, and then I'd concentrate on building the story around that. And then I'm not worried about losing half my budget on one scene, that mightn't have the desired impact. With the stories I pick, I know I can put all the money up on screen for everyone to see, in terms of grit, in terms of cast, in terms of location. And I think that's a facet of filmmaking that a lot of filmmakers starting out don't think about.

JF:

What would you consider to be the strengths of the kind of production we undertook?

OM:

The one weakness for me was that you, I and Ruth couldn't sit down as much as we would have liked. It was all done on Skype, which is fine but I still think there is something tangible to sitting down in a room with somebody. The atmosphere can add something to the production. That was a minor weakness I think, but another major weakness was that you weren't here for the shoot. From a production perspective I don't like having the screenwriter on set so I don't know how you would have reacted to that, but it would have been good to have somebody who was a producer on hand because Ruth and I were been taken away by other roles on the production. We were thinking about getting a scene made when in actual fact we should have been thinking about the shots for the scene, or the story. But I also think moving forward that I won't be involved in a production again unless the producer is in the same country. They don't have to be on the set, but if they're a phone call away, it can make a difference and it can impact the production in some way.

As for the strengths, as I've said that we had work to go before we knew each other's strength. when you ask each person was going to bring to the party and we had a Clear Vision as to what the end result of the film would be. the biggest strength of still life from me was the story and I think that's what the track is a lot of people to the project especially the cast. we were able to secure our crew because I was able to go to them and ask them and they knew what kind of project that we're getting on board with the new what a work would be like I know that's what attracted are cinematographer was the dancing sequences because he saw ways to express themselves through the scenes in the way that he captured the movement. and we were able to get the crew through my influence because they had worked with me in the past and they know the kind of work the day would be doing how they were going to be looked after so I suppose the strength was the people who were involved in it but I think the overriding strength was story.

JF:

Could you speak about the importance of networking in film production?

OM:

Networking is evolution that I could never have imagined working with out before that I couldn't work with no matter how much you paid me. as a filmmaker as you progress your skills and Talents are homes and if people don't move with you at that same pace you have to leave them behind or your work will suffer. I think the more uniform with someone the more you collaborate with someone the stronger that work becomes. and it also increases your chances of working with other people as well in the 45 years since I've known Camille or cinematographer our work is come along very well and now people want to work with us as well. it strengthens your hand you getting a recruiter work with you.

JF:

Technology has afforded us opportunities we didn't have ten years ago. But this has also been an issue for you. Can you talk about how this has impacted your work?

OM:

My background is in television serial television not 1 hour episodes and so the middle of my work is done to face to face meeting and when you spend 56 years working that way it's very difficult to do it any other way full stop if we forget Skype and just think about the Script I can

have a script sent to me in 20 seconds were as before it would have taken a longer time through my locker room. Know if somebody makes changes to the Script I can have a new draught sent almost immediately. it's interesting because when we were just plotting out story we are able to do this through meetings through Skype but the minute we talk on producer roles I think that when we had to meet face to face. I think even editors can work off site but producers and directors have to meet face to face with each other. it has made worldwide connection a lot easier. my work would not have been seen by festivals in America or even central Europe with online support.

JF:

How do you view the festival landscape now, in comparison with online distribution models?

OM:

Festivals don't hold this way that they use to have 5 years ago. Even 5 years ago if you put your film up online they wouldn't even look at you. If you're not. A lot of films won't even look at you if you're not a Premier. I don't think it's fair for film festivals to discount a film just because it's not a premier. If it's not a premier fine don't put it in competition but that doesn't mean you don't have to exclude it. Festivals still hold filmmakers to ransom. You pay even though you haven't been accepted, online applications means you don't know where you're going. I've said it before, there is an oversaturation of film festivals in the marketplace. Financially alone, you have to be selective of where you send your film. It can be a mine field. You have to be strong and defined strategy, which with a short might seem farfetched, but if you're trying to get full exposure for your work, than you need to think about these things. With the small film festivals, I would use it as a test screening, to see how a film that is near completion plays.

In terms of online. Online is a tough one, purely because you are limited again in terms of audience. You are relying on a link, and if no one sees the link then no one is going to see it. Shorts in particular, I very rarely put shorts up online. I put music videos up because I think that's the appropriate medium. Short films, I think, if you haven't got the audience in the first 30 seconds on YouTube, you lose them. Vimeo attracts a more discerning viewer who is looking for something like that. YouTube I listen to music. Even with a short you need to have a very exact and very defined marketing strategy.

JF:

How do you think it will impact your attempt to get the *Still Life* to market?

OM:

I personally think the marketing aspect of the short film is normally the most expensive. I think its going too be the most expensive aspect of Still Life. Mainly because you have to decide which festivals you are going to trickle it out to, such as Newport Beach, I think is \$100. Nowadays a \$100 is “do I eat this week?”. I personally think festivals down the line are going to become – as has with Sundance – which started as an indie festival, now has Harvey Weinstein going to it – that’s not what Sundance started out as. Even now, the Galway Film Fleadh is going that way, because it has the Oscar connection. Studios are going to be using these festivals, and that’s going to make it harder for us. I think the smaller and more indie festivals will become more prominent then, because of that. And then they will become too big and it will be a vicious cycle, as most things are.

JF:

Do you think about the credibility of festivals and audiences?

OM:

If I was a hobbyist filmmaker, I don’t think it would matter to me who saw my film, but because this is my profession, it is important what my exposure is. I remember being asked in film school long ago about how I would feel if I never made a single penny off of my work, and I think the naïve 21 year old at the time in me said I wouldn’t mind. I think that’s changed now. Fast forward ten years now, married with kids, trying to make this my profession. My priorities change. Ask me six years ago, I would have said, an audience is an audience. Now I have to think about the audience and the market that’s best for me.

JF:

If it was paying your bills to a reasonable degree, would you be satisfied in this position?

OM:

I think in any creative endeavour, when you settle on a routine, you are no good anymore. I think you’re only as good as your last work. If you keep coming back to your last work, then you’re never going to grow as an artist, or as a person.

JF:

Do you think that's why festivals are going in that direction?

OM:

Unfortunately I think it's a business thing. Festivals cost so much money to run. That's why you have so many managing directors now instead of artists and filmmakers. If it was just artists and filmmakers they would be gone in 18 months.

JF:

How do you view the climate of crowdfunding, and the idea that there is an audience waiting for you potentially?

OM:

I would disagree with you that there is an audience waiting for you. That's purely because of – let's take for example, *Still Life* versus *Wish I was Here*. If Zach Braff wasn't who he was, would he have got 3million in three days? No. I'm just Oisin, he's Zach Braff. He's done so much that people are just going to say that's a banker. If I was to do it, "who is he?". It's dangerous to think there's already a market there.

If we look at *Still Life*, we may have been too ambitious in how much we wanted. We were lucky in that we were able to source everything quite easily, but in terms of how we modelled the fundraising campaign, and how we went about it, it was every second day pumping it in your face. One day it was on Twitter, and then Facebook and so on. We always put up something new about the project as well, something new to say. We put up that video by Seth Rogen on mental health, and I think we got our biggest donation after that. It was a colleague of mine who had been affected by the subject matter. He saw the project and gave us the money. If he hadn't we might not have been able to make the movie. I think crowd funding can be dangerous in the circle we current live in. Because it ends up being friends giving friends. I give someone 25 euros and they give it back to me. If you look at Sean's film in Cork at the moment, most of his funders are people involved in the production. So they are essentially paying themselves to work. I think the way he went about making that campaign is stale. It's a case of trying to be funny and clever. Just rehashing someone else's clever idea from five or six years ago. Whereas, with ours, there was no visuals in it from the film, but it gave you a sense of the mood and story, which a lot of our contributors bought into because they could see where the film was going.

I worked on a campaign last year and his video gave no sense of how the film was going to look. He kept pushing the glamour aspect of filmmaking, the red carpet, the big screen. I think that the rewards that you do are as important as the promise of the film itself.

JF:

There's an attempt it seems to think about the bigger circles outside of these productions. Rather than just existing within these circles of production, we seem to strive for bigger and more ambitious circles. Do you think that there is a freedom in the way we currently make films that we wouldn't have if we were in those bigger sectors?

OM:

Oh without a doubt. It's a eutopian idea, but it's not realistic. I think crowdfunding is a bad example of how films get made, personally speaking.

JF:

Can you elaborate?

OM:

It's a bad idea to think that Zach Braff is a case study for how these movies get their money. You need people who can go on record and express their belief in the story, just like Ruth did with our films. I plan moving forward to always have a social media expert on productions. Social Media is so important to keep in touch with your public, to let them in behind the scenes. Social Media is vital now – you use it to drip feed your story, to get them interested. I find it really hard not to click on Indiegogo, when I'm on their social media page and I read a good blurb. But not when they are bombarding me with posts.

JF:

Can you talk about Government funding bodies and their influence on productions.

OM:

I haven't been successful in my funding attempts with government bodies. Part of the problem with my submission, is that you need a member of your team who has a credit with that same award. No one can't tell me that the talent pool outside of this model isn't better than what's on the inside. You can call it a government funding body, but it's essentially a corporation giving

money. You need a duty of care to the tax payer to ensure that the money is being given to the best possible productions. We applied once for a horror project, and it took three months for them to get back to us with a no. We could have crowdfunded the project in that time. There needs to be a better turnaround, and better transparency.

JF:

Do you see any difference between funding bodies and a conventional production company?

OM:

The main one is that the Irish Funding Board is in theory open to all, whereas a production company is more often than not won't look at you without representation. It makes it easier to get on the ladder with the funding bodies.

JF:

But then you said earlier that you need to have connections to that body.

OM:

I think what I mean is that the funding body will at least open the envelope. They'll sit down and talk to you if it's good enough. But if you send in your script in a brown envelope to a production company, more often than not, it will go in the bin. Neither of them are going to take a chance on someone fresh out of college with no experience to their name.

Appendix D

Dylan Kussman Interview

JF:

Describe the timeline of events from when you got involved with *The Mummy*?

DK:

Well, every movie is different. Every movie is unique, and I only have experience with two movies like this and they both happened in the last couple of years. I was brought on to Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation in the middle of the production shoot, and then I was brought onto The Mummy about six weeks before they started shooting back in February of 2016. But to stick to this movie, the development process had been going on for several years, before I was ever involved. The first draft of the script was written by a very well-known screenwriter called Jon Spaihts. They then went through other sets of writers, looking at different angles of the story, and the studio had some ideas that they wanted to include. Alex Kurtzman, who ended up directing the film and is the mastermind of the ‘Dark Universe’, he had ideas and took a swing at the script for a while. This was years before I was involved. So there were all these tough decisions like what is my movie, why am I making this movie, what is the structure, who are the characters – that was all done for me. The same goes for Rogue Nation.

So then, Universal got very serious about launching this movie and about launching this Dark Universe idea, so they got Tom Cruise to read whatever script it was at the time, and asked if he would star in it, and he said yes. When an actor of Tom Cruise’s stature and power in the industry agrees to come on board a project, he then becomes a very significant voice in that project, and so he said here’s the direction I want to go in with the script, and I want to work with Christopher McQuarrie, because I’ve worked with him for the last ten years, on Valkyrie, Mission Impossible, and Jack Reacher. They have a shorthand, they have a friendship, they have a language, so he said I want to bring on Chris. Universal was fine with this, after all, he’s an academy award winning screenwriter. So Chris came on board. At this point, Chris suggested to Tom that they bring me on, and we do what we did for the second half of the Rogue Nation shoot – Chris can write the film, Dylan can feed pages into the script and we can all work together, and Tom said yes.

So that’s when I get the phone call. I had to leave for London on 48 hours’ notice, leaving my wife and four-year-old son, which was very difficult, thinking I was going to be gone for the six weeks leading up to principle photography. I thought my job was going to be rewrite the

script from page one, according to Chris and Tom and Alex's new take on the material. But when I show up for the first day, Chris says, come on into the war room. He takes me in to this huge conference room, and on the walls all around the room are these amazing matte paintings of every set, every location and everything, and Chris spends an hour walking me through the paintings from the first picture to the last picture saying "here's what happens...". He walks me through the whole movie. This is the kind of stuff that, as an independent screenwriter or someone writing your own stuff, you are grappling to figure out. What's the structure, where does it go, what's the movement of the story? It laid it out in beautiful detailed matte paintings. So the movie I came to work on was already well under way. They had built all of these sets, cast all the actors. My job was to take all that and rebuild it as a screenplay that gave Tom the character work he wanted, on his character and everyone else's character, and story transitions, movement of scenes, finding humour where appropriate, the action beats that Chris and Tom specialise in. And then for the next two weeks, I wrote a draft, Chris wrote a draft, and we gave notes on each other's drafts. Alex had his notes, Tom had his notes, and it was time to start shooting on April 4th. I thought I was on a plane to come back to LA and they said, you're not going anywhere, because, Alex is directing, Christopher McQuarrie has got a thousand other projects he's working on, we need a writer on set, because Tom likes a writer on set. Tom likes a writer on set because he wants someone to respond to improve, or suggestions such as this scene is too long, let's cut it. And we need these rewrites done now and we need them in the sides for the shooting that we're going to start doing in an hour. We need cue cards done for anything such as action sequences. There needs to be a writer at work on set, feeding into the process where necessary. So I ended up doing that for four and a half months.

I'm in uncharted territory here, this is not where I live. I usually live in smaller budget, scrappy stuff. I did two series of a web series on a shoe string, I directed my first feature recently, two week shoots for 400,000 dollars. Being at the heart of a 200-million-dollar movie for Universal Pictures is crazy. So that's the story from beginning to end. We wrapped in September, and the film is in post. Because I have a good relationship with Alex Kurtzman now, he's asked me into the editing room. I've seen different cuts of scenes, a cut of the movie, and now my education is really moving into new waters, because I'm in this post process. Editing, reediting, test screenings – these parts don't work, we're going to reshoot this stuff. I'm in a whole new post production revisionary process of a movie, where the studio is very interested and they have input, Tom, Chris they all have their input, so there is a lot of voices, and I'm just trying to listen to them really. That's what I've been trying to do from the beginning really – mouth

shut, ears open and fingers moving. Pages coming out, you don't like them I can rewrite them. Just keep working. A worker among workers.

JF:

Your experiences seem very different to the kind of things described in many books and other literature.

DK:

How about taking an acting class? I've been a film and television actor for 35 years and that informs my writing. And that's actually the reason why Tom likes working with me, because the first time Tom worked with me as an actor was on Jack Reacher. He trusts me as an actor, so now as I've come back into his life with Chris, when look at Tom and I say "no dude it's not going to play like that. She's going to say lalala, and you can go dadada", he looks at me and says "ah I get that". So he responds to the fact that I can function as an actor, I know what the actors are going to go for. It becomes apart of the writing. So many writers don't know the acting craft from anything, so there's a conflict between the writers and the actors, because its like when Harrison Ford said to George Lucas on the set of Star Wars, "Hey George, you can write this shit, but you sure can't say it." That is the relationship between more actors and writers than you would guess.

DK:

I'm very fortunate right now to be part of the post process and the editing process. You know, and the reason why a lot of writers don't deal with it, is because a lot of productions say "thank you for the screenplay, we'll see you at the premier".

JF:

I find it very interesting that the stars of these films, in this case Tom Cruise, would want the writer on set.

DK:

He wants a writer on set every day. I think the reason a lot of producers and directors don't is because we're trouble. They're like "why didn't you shoot it the way I wrote it?" That's just not the way I work. I work on how do I help you get this scene. And now that we're on set, and the camera is pointing at you like that, you know what we should do... that's what I'm there to

do. Let's rewrite it right now, which is very Cassavettes, if you think about it. Cassavettes was all about beating himself up for years writing a screenplay, and then when he walked onto the set, he'd throw it all out – because all of these things in his head don't match up. Throw it out and let's do it this way. I find that very inspiring. It's part of the organic process of screenwriting. You are constantly in rewrite mode. It's never done. It's never done until the day you release the film. And a lot of writers want to say, now that I've pressed the last period on the fourth rewrite it's done. It's not done. It's actually just started, and your screenplay is going to get consumed by the fires of production. And you want to watch it burn. You want to help it burn. Because the important thing is the scene, not the script. The performance. It's about getting the scene from a-b, and if your script is getting in the way, chuck it.

JF:

This seemed to be very different from your other experiences as a writer.

DK:

Well, the guy who goes through the production of a Tom Cruise production has a very different experience from the sixth guy who was brought into write back in 2014. He really did just turn in his draft and was never spoken to again.

JF:

Did you ever engage with these previous writers in any way.

DK:

Alex Kurtzman was one of those writers so I got to work with him. I met Jon Spaghts, but never got to speak extensively with him. Every writer who comes onto a project like this just takes what's there and consumes it into their own process, and doesn't worry about the opinions or thoughts of the writer who created them.

JF:

What kind of notes or feedback were you getting from these people?

DK:

I would spend the morning by myself, working through whatever was the work for the day, and then I would go onto set. At some point, Alex and Tom would call me to have a

conversation about things that were going to change. I would then go away and work on it. I would spend time in the producer's tent, sitting with the producers talking to me about what Tom and Alex were working on. And Chris was a constant presence behind me. I was always getting his thoughts and direction. He was the executive writer of sorts above me, so it was a constant process of looping him in on set, and what Tom and Alex are talking about now. Do we like that? And sometimes I would have to take Chris' feedback to Alex and Tom. They would either agree with his notes, or they would say we want to do it this way. It was a diplomatic part in many ways that I was playing it. I was in-between some huge creative forces, and making sure everyone was happy with what they were getting. It was very bizarre, but cool though.

JF:

Did you like the process of working like this?

DK:

I did. I'm very lucky that this movement in my career has arrived. I've been preparing for it, so I feel very fortunate and I feel that I'm good at it. It's very encouraging that I was able to come onto Mission Impossible at such a high pressure time, and then for Tom and Chris to ask me back into another process, was extremely flattering to me. I'm very humbled by it.

JF:

How did the presence of such a powerful and influential figure such as Tom Cruise on set change the dynamic of the screenwriting process?

DK:

It's valuable to have a resource on set who has been doing it for as long and as well as he has. When he says 'lower your chin, because it makes you look better', he knows from when he speaks. When he says the shot will look better from that side, there's a part of you that just goes with it. His instincts are born of 40 years of hit movie making experience.

JF:

Has that catalogue of work informed your writing?

DK:

I take my cue from McQuarrie – we try to think character first. And I love when we get to something we haven't seen before. And Tom will reach, he's always reaching. He's always in process. He's an actor questing for the next moment and the next scene. And that's a real pleasure to be around, star power aside. He's always working and sometimes he doesn't get it, and he'll tell you that he doesn't get it. He'll have a scene, and he'll get on set, and you'll talk with him about the scene and then he'll say "okay, now I get it.". He's so engaged and committed and involved. He doesn't have all the answers all the time, but he's an artist.

Appendix E
Release Forms



Bangor University's 'Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic
Quality and Standards of Research Programmes' (Code 03)
<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/regulations/home.htm>

COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's name John Finnegan

The researcher named above has briefed me to my satisfaction on the research for which I have volunteered. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any point. I also understand that my rights to anonymity and confidentiality will be respected.

I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. ☒

Signature of participant Dyfe

Date 20/01/2017

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



Bangor University's 'Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic
Quality and Standards of Research Programmes' (Code 03)
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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. ☒

Oisín Mac Coille

Signature of participant

15/01/2017

Date

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.



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I agree to having the interview/discussion recorded. ☒

Signature of participant 

18/01/2017

Date

This form will be produced in duplicate. One copy should be retained by the participant and the other by the researcher.

Appendix F
***At the Crossing* Production Schedule**

Scene	Act	Sequence	Synopsis	Location	INT / EXT	Day / Night	Running Time	Pages	Story Day	Time of Day	Set	Characters	Extras
30	1	13		UK	EXT	DAY (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	6	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE - MORNING	BARBUSHKA/ YOUNG GIRL	
36	2	38		UK	EXT	NIGHT (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1.8"	10	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL/ BARBUSHKA/ MAN/ YOUNG SOFYA	
87	2	39		UK	INT	NIGHT (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1.8"	10	00:00	THE LARHOUSE, BEDROOM	YOUNG GIRL/ BARBUSHKA/ MAN/ YOUNG SOFYA	
88	2	38		UK	EXT	NIGHT (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	10	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL/ BARBUSHKA/ MAN/ YOUNG SOFYA	
102	2	44		UK	EXT	NIGHT (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"4.8"	12	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL/ BARBUSHKA	
118	2	40		UK	EXT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"2.8"	12	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	RADJO/ YOUNG GIRL	
119	2	48		UK	INT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"2.8"	12	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE	RADJO/ YOUNG GIRL/ TWO SOLDIERS	
120	2	48		UK	EXT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1.8"	12	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	YOUNG GIRL/ TWO SOLDIERS/ EVACUEES	
121	2	40		UK	INT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1.8"	12	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL	
122	2	48		UK	INT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"1.8"	12	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, BEDROOM	YOUNG GIRL	
123	2	48		UK	EXT	MORNING (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"3.8"	12	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	YOUNG GIRL/ TWO SOLDIERS/ EVACUEES	
133	3	52		UK	EXT	DAY (FLASHBACK)	00:00:00	"4.8"	13	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	YOUNG GIRL/ YOUNG SOFYA/ BARBUSHKA	
END OF DAY 1													
1	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.2/8"	1	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	POACHER #1/ POACHER #2/ SOFYA	
2	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"3.8"	1	00:00	ROAD	OLENA/ POACHER #1/ POACHER #2	OLENA'S FRIENDS
4	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"2.8"	1	00:00	ROAD	OLENA	OLENA'S FRIENDS
5	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.8"	1	00:00	CROSSROADS	OLENA	OLENA'S FRIENDS
6	1	1		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.8"	1	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	OLENA	
7	1	2		UK	EXT	DAWN	00:00:00	"1.8"	2	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	VITALITY	LOCAL POLICE
8	1	2		UK	INT	MORNING	00:00:00	"3.8"	2	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA/ SOFYA	
9	1	1		UK	EXT	MORNING	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	2	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA/ SOFYA/ VITALITY	LOCAL POLICE
10	1	2		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"7.8"	2	00:00	POLICE STATION	SOFYA/ VITALITY	LOCAL POLICE
11	1	4		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	2	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM, BARN	SOFYA	
12	1	4		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	2	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA/ SOFYA	
13	1	4		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"5.8"	2	00:00	BARN	FEMALE RANGER/ SOFYA/ VET	
14	1	4		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"1"	2	00:00	BARN	FEMALE RANGER/ SOFYA	
END OF DAY 2													
17	1	6		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	2	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	SOFYA	
18	1	7		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.2/8"	2	00:00	LOCAL WOODLAND	FRIEND #1/ FRIEND #2/ FRIEND #3/ OLENA	OLENA'S FRIENDS
19	1	8		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	3	00:00	MARKET	PAVLO/ OLENA/ SOFYA	VILLAGERS
20	1	8		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.4/8"	3	00:00	MARKET	MARKET MAN/ OLENA/ PAVLO/ SOFYA	VILLAGERS
15	1	5		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	2	00:00	POLICE STATION	YOUNG POLICE OFFICER/ SOFYA/ VITALITY/ ANTON	LOCAL POLICE
16	1	5		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.8"	2	00:00	POLICE STATION	SOFYA	
END OF DAY 3													
21	1	9		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"2.8"	3	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA	
22	1	9		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.8"	3	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE	OLENA	
23	1	9		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"7.8"	3	00:00	BARN	OLENA/ SOFYA	
24	1	9		UK	INT	THE NEXT MORNING	00:00:00	"3.8"	4	00:00	BARN	OLENA/ FEMALE RANGER/ VET/ SOFYA	
25	1	9		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.8"	4	00:00	BARN	FEMALE RANGER/ VET/ OLENA/ SOFYA	
26	1	10		UK	EXT	THE NEXT DAY	00:00:00	"1.2/8"	5	00:00	SOFYA VITALITY	OLENA/ PAVLO/ SOFYA	
28	1	12		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"3.8"	6	00:00	SURACHI VILLAGE	LENA/ FRIEND #1/ FRIEND #2/ FRIEND #3/ VITALITY/ ANTON/ YOUNG POLICE OFFICER	
29	1	12		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"4.8"	6	00:00	OLENA'S BEDROOM	OLENA	
31	1	13		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"4.8"	6	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM, THE PRESENT	OLENA/ SOFYA	
END OF DAY 4													
32	1	11		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"5.8"	5	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA/ SOFYA	
33	1	11		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.8"	5	00:00	SOFYA'S BEDROOM	OLENA/ SOFYA	
33	1	14		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"2.8"	6	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE	SOFYA/ VITALITY	
34	1	15		UK	INT	MORNING	00:00:00	"1.8"	7	00:00	SOFYA'S BEDROOM	PAVLO/ SOFYA	
35	1	15		UK	EXT	MORNING	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	7	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE	OLENA/ PAVLO/ SOFYA	
36	1	15		UK	INT	MORNING	00:00:00	"1.8"	7	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA/ PAVLO/ SOFYA	
37	1	16		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2"	7	00:00	ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE	ELDERLY NEIGHBOUR/ OLENA/ SOFYA	ELDERLY VILLAGERS
38	1	17		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"4.8"	7	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	OLENA/ SOFYA	
END OF DAY 5													
39	1	18		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	7	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA/ SOFYA	
40	1	18		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"2.8"	7	00:00	OLENA'S BEDROOM	OLENA/ SOFYA	
41	1	20		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.2/8"	7	00:00	POLICE STATION, CELL	ANTON/ SOFYA	
42	1	23		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"1"	8	00:00	POLICE STATION, OFFICE	OFFICER #1/ OFFICER #2/ SOFYA/ VITALITY	LOCAL POLICE
43	1	21		UK	INT	DAWN	00:00:00	"4.8"	8	00:00	ANTON/ OLENA/ SOFYA		
43	1	21		UK	INT	DAWN	00:00:00	"2.8"	8	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	OLENA/ SOFYA/ ANTON	
44	2	23		UK	INT	DAWN	00:00:00	"5.8"	8	00:00	OLENA'S BEDROOM	OLENA/ SOFYA	
END OF DAY 6													
49	2	25		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.8"	8	00:00	SOFYA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	SOFYA/ VITALITY	
50	2	25		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"1.8"	8	00:00	SOFYA'S FARM	SOFYA/ VITALITY	
51	2	26		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"2.8"	8	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	OLENA/ ANTON	
52	2	26		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	8	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA	
53	2	26		UK	EXT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.8"	8	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA	
54	2	26		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"4.8"	8	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA	
END OF DAY 7													
55	2	27		UK	INT	MORNING	00:00:00	"7.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA	
56	2	27		UK	EXT	MORNING	00:00:00	"2.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	OLENA	
57	2	27		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.8"	9	00:00	FOREST	OLENA	
58	2	27		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.8"	9	00:00	FOREST	OLENA	
59	2	27		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.8"	9	00:00	FOREST	ANTON/ OLENA	
60	2	28		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	9	00:00	ABANDONED SCHOOL	ANTON/ OLENA	
61	2	28		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.8"	9	00:00	CLASSROOM	ANTON/ OLENA	
62	2	28		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	9	00:00	CORRIDOR	OLENA	
63	2	28		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"7.8"	9	00:00	SCHOOL ROOF	ANTON/ OLENA	
64	2	28		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.6/8"	9	00:00	FOREST	ANTON/ OLENA	
END OF DAY 8													
65	2	29		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"1.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	OLENA/ ANTON	
66	2	29		UK	INT	EVENING	00:00:00	"3.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA	
67	2	29		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"2.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	OLENA	
68	2	29		UK	INT	EVENING	00:00:00	"1.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	OLENA	
69	2	29		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"1.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	OLENA	
70	2	29		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"3.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA	
71	2	29		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"1.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	ANTON/ OLENA	
72	2	29		UK	EXT	EVENING	00:00:00	"7.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	OLENA/ ANTON/ SOFYA	
73	2	30		UK	INT	EVENING	00:00:00	"2.8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	OLENA/ SOFYA	
74	2	30		UK	INT	EVENING	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	9	00:00	THE LARHOUSE	ANTON/ SOFYA	
END OF DAY 9													
75	2	30		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	10	00:00	RIVER BANK	SOFYA/ ANTON/ OLENA	
76	2	30		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	10	00:00	SHELTER	SOFYA/ ANTON/ OLENA	
78	2	33		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	10	00:00	RIVER BANK	SOFYA/ ANTON/ OLENA	
81	2	33		UK	INT	EVENING	00:00:00	"5.8"	10	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	MAMA/ MYKOLA/ VIRA/ SOFYA/ OLENA/ ANTON	
82	2	34		UK	INT	EVENING	00:00:00	"1.8"	10	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM	SOFYA	
82	2	35		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.8"	10	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM	SOFYA	
83	2	36		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.8"	10	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM	SOFYA	
84	2	37		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.1/8"	10	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	SOFYA/ VITALITY	
85	2	37		UK	INT	NIGHT	00:00:00	"1.8"	10	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, BEDROOM	OLENA	
END OF DAY 10													
89	2	39		UK	EXT	MORNING	00:00:00	"1.3/8"	11	00:00	YANIV OUTPOSTS	MAMA/ SOFYA	
90	2	39		UK	EXT	MORNING	00:00:00	"1.4/8"	11	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE	OLENA/ VIRA	
91	2	39		UK	EXT	MORNING	00:00:00	"1.2/8"	11	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE	ANTON/ MAMA/ MYKOLA/ OLENA/ VIRA	
92	2	40		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	11	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	MAMA/ MYKOLA/ SOFYA	YANIV FEMALE VILLAGERS
93	2	40		UK	EXT	DAY	00:00:00	"1.8"	11	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE	OLENA/ ANTON	
94	2	40		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"1"	11	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN	MAMA/ MYKOLA/ VILLAGER #1/ VILLAGER #4/ SOFYA	YANIV FEMALE VILLAGERS
95	2	40		UK	INT	DAY	00:00:00	"2.8"	11	00:00	MAMA'S FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM	OLENA/ ANTON	

Additional Labor	Animal Handler	Animals	Props	Weapons	CGI	Special Effects	Wardrobe	Special Equipment	Stunts	Vehicles	Weather	Makeup	Cast Members
	Horse handler	Station	New white pennant banner								Clear		
	Horse handler Horse handler	Young Station Young Station			Helicopter								
	Horse handler	Young Station								MILITARY TRUCK			
										MILITARY TRUCK			
	Horse handler Horse handler	Young Station Young Station								MILITARY TRUCK			
Armourer	Horse handler	's Stallion/ Sofya's plough	Rope/ Flashlights etc.	Sofya's Snipper Rifle	Bullet hole in Truck					Horse box/ Poacher truck	Rain		
										Horse box/ Poacher truck	Rain		
										Horse box/ Poacher truck	Rain		
Armourer										Horse box/ Poacher truck	Rain		
Armourer							Olena's sweater				Clear		
											Clear		
Horse handler	Sofya's plough horse	Froagh									Clear		
Horse handler	Sofya's plough horse									Ranger's truck	Clear		
Horse handler	Sofya's plough horse									Ranger's truck	Clear		
			Stained white pennant banner								Clear		
			Bottle of vodka				Clothes for sale			Delivery Trucks	Clear		
			Clothes for sale				Olena's coat			Delivery Trucks	Clear		
											Clear		
											Clear		
			Medallion								Clear		
Armourer	Horse handler	Sofya's plough horse		Sofya's Snipper Rifle		Exhalation in darkness					Clear		
Horse handler	Sofya's plough horse										Clear		
Horse handler	Sofya's plough horse		Photographs of poachers' Axe							Ranger's truck	Clear		
							Olena's coat				Clear		
			Photograph of Olena and Friend								Clear		
			Stained white pennant banner/ Penny Wine								Clear		
			Birthday cake				Olena's coat				Clear		
			Blanket								Clear		
Armourer			Blanket	Shotgun							Clear		
											Clear		
											Clear		
			WW2 Photograph/ Tea/ Sewing kit				Olena's sweater				Clear		
			Candle/ Crucifix				Olena's sweater				Clear		
			Food Preparation								Clear		
			Medallion								Clear		
Armourer				Sofya's Snipper Rifle							Clear		
											Clear		
											Clear		
			Babushka's WW2 accozades								Clear		
											Clear		
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer	Animal handler	Wolf	Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer	Animal handler	Wolf Pack	Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle	Chernobyl Background		Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle			Sofya's coat/ Olena's coat						
Armourer			Olena's bag/ Sofya's bag	Sofya's Snipper Rifle									

[illegible]

Appendix G
At the Crossing Production Budget

Production: At the Crossing		Budget Draft Date:	16/06/2016
Length: 20 Days		Shooting Date(s):	MM/DD/YY
Budget: £88,305.00			
Account #	Category	Specifics	Total
1	STORY & OTHER RIGHTS		£0.00
2	PRODUCER UNIT		£0.00
3	DIRECTOR UNIT		£0.00
4	TALENT		£13,305.00
5	TRAVEL/HOUSING		£32,500.00
		TOTAL ABOVE THE LINE COSTS:	£45,805.00
6	PRODUCTION STAFF		£1,350.00
7	BACKGROUND		£1,000.00
8	PRODUCTION DESIGN		£1,850.00
9	PROPERTY		£5,850.00
10	SET DRESSING		£2,500.00
11	SET CONSTRUCTION		£0.00
12	SPECIAL EFFECTS		£3,050.00
13	CAMERA		£3,850.00
14	ELECTRIC		£2,000.00
15	GRIP		£500.00
16	PRODUCTION SOUND		£1,050.00
17	SET OPERATIONS		£1,050.00
18	COSTUME/WARDROBE		£2,000.00
19	HAIR/MAKEUP		£2,450.00
20	LOCATIONS		£4,350.00
		TOTAL BELOW THE LINE COSTS:	£33,650.00
21	PRODUCTION STOCK/DIGITIZING		£0.00
22	PRODUCTION OVERHEAD		£0.00
23	EDITING		£1,000.00
24	DIGITAL CONFORM/ FINISH		£0.00
25	POST PRODUCTION SOUND		£3,850.00
26	MUSIC		£1,500.00
27	CGI		£2,500.00
28	TITLES		£0.00
29	POST PRODUCTION OVERHEAD		£0.00
		TOTAL POST PRODUCTION COSTS:	£8,850.00
30	GENERAL DISTRIBUTION LABOR/FEES		£0.00
31	DVD/BLU-RAY DISTRIBUTION		£0.00
32	PUBLICITY		£0.00
33	CREATIVE MATERIALS		£0.00
34	PRINTING MATERIALS		£0.00
35	THEATRICAL PRINTS		£0.00
36	DIRECT MEDIA		£0.00
37	GENERAL OVERHEAD		£0.00
38	OTHER DELIVERY EXPENSES		£0.00
		TOTAL DISTRIBUTION/MARKETING COSTS:	£0.00
GRAND TOTAL:			£88,305.00

Account #	Category	Specifics	AMT	UNIT	X	RATE	Total
1	STORY & OTHER RIGHTS						
1.2	Writer	John Finnegan	1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
1.3	Credit Bonus		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
1.4	Publication Fee		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
1.5	Clearance Report		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
1.6	Copyright Fee		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
1.7	Misc. Xeroxing and Postage		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
						Account Total	£0.00
2	PRODUCERS UNIT						
2.2	Executive Producers		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
2.3	Producers	John Finnegan	1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
2.4	Associate Producers		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
2.5	Development Expenses		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
2.6	Marketing Consultant		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
						Account Total	£0.00
3	DIRECTORS UNIT						
3.1	Director	Mathew Alan Owen	1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
3.2	Director Expenses		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
3.3	Assistant Directors		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
						Account Total	£0.00
4	TALENT						
4.1	Leads	Sofiya/ Olena/ Anton	20	DAY	3	£85.00	£6,375.00
4.2	Supporting	Vitaliy/ Young Sofiya/ Young Olena/ Pavlo/ Mama/ Mykola/ Vira/ Kio/	3	DAY	12	£85.00	£3,060.00
4.3	Day Roles	Female Ranger/ Vel/ Elderly Neighbour/ Poacher #1/ Poacher #2/	1	DAY	11	£85.00	£935.00
4.4	ADR/Voice-Over	Radio	1	DAY	1	£85.00	£85.00
4.5	Performers		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
4.6	Stunts	Sofiya Stunt/ Olena Stunt	3	DAY	2	£250.00	£1,500.00
4.7	Fittings and Rehearsals		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
4.8	Casting Director	TBC	1	DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
4.9	Casting Space		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
4.1.1	Rehearsal Space	TBC	1	DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
						Account Total	£13,305.00
5	TRAVEL/HOUSING						
5.1	Flights	Return travel to Ukraine	1	DAY	1	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
5.2	Minors Tutoring/Work Permit		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
5.3	Living Expenses	Food allowance	1	DAY	1	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
5.4	Travel	Mini Vans and Petrol	1	DAY	1	£3,500.00	£3,500.00
5.5	Accommodation	Hotels and B&Bs	25	DAY	20	£50.00	£25,000.00
						Account Total	£32,500.00
						TOTAL:	\$45,805.00
6	PRODUCTION STAFF						
6.1	Line Producer		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
6.2	Unit Production Manager		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
6.3	1st AD	TBC	1	DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
6.4	2nd AD		25	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
6.5	Set PA		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
6.6	Production Coordinator		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
6.7	Assistant Production Coordinator		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
6.8	Production Accountant		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
6.9	Script Supervisor	Student	1	DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
6.1.1	Expendables		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
						Account Total	£1,350.00
7	BACKGROUND						
7.1	Extras (SAG and Non-SAG)	Orphans/ Poachers	1	DAY	20	£50.00	£1,000.00
7.2	Extras Casting		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
7.3	Wardrobe		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
7.4	Extras Meals	Catering	1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
7.5	Extras Travel		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
						Account Total	£1,000.00
8	PRODUCTION DESIGN						
8.1	Production Designer	TBC	1	DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
8.2	Art Director		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
8.3	Art Department Coordinator		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
8.4	Storyboard Artist		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
8.5	Art Pas	Student	1	DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
8.6	Kit Fees		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
8.7	Expendables		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
8.8	Breakage	TBC	1	DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
						Account Total	£1,850.00
9	PROPERTY						
9.1	Propmaster	TBC	1	DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
9.2	Best Boy Props		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
9.3	3rd Props		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
9.4	Key Greens		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
9.5	Best Boy Greens		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
9.6	Props PA	Student	1	DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
9.7	Prop Purchases/Rentals	TBC	1	DAY	1	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
9.8	Picture Vehicle Rentals	TBC	1	DAY	1	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
9.9	Kit Fees		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
9.1.1	Expendables		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
9.1.2	Breakage	TBC	1	DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
						Account Total	£5,850.00
10	SET DRESSING						
10.1	Set Decorator	TBC	1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
10.2	Leadman		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
10.3	Key Off-Set Decorator		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
10.4	Set Dressers	Student	1	DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
10.5	Set Dressing Materials/Rentals	TBC	1	DAY	1	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
10.6	Kit Fees		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
10.7	Expendables		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
						Account Total	£2,500.00
11	SET CONSTRUCTION						
11.1	Construction Coordinator		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
11.2	Key Carpenter		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
11.3	Carpenters		1	DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00

11.4	Construction Key Grip		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
11.5	Construction Grips		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
11.6	Construction Electrics		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
11.7	Set Construction Materials		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
11.8	Stage Dressing		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
11.9	Kit Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
11.1.1	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
Account Total						£0.00
12	SPECIAL EFFECTS					
12.1	FX Supervisor	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
12.2	Animals and Wranglers	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
12.3	Armorer/Pyrotechnic	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
12.4	Wire Rigging		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
12.5	Greenscreen Materials		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
12.6	Prosthetics		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
12.7	Weapons Rental and Expendables	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
12.8	Other Equipment Rentals		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
12.9	Kit Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
12.1.1	FX Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
Account Total						£3,050.00
13	CAMERA					
13.1	Director of Photography	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
13.2	Camera Operator		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.3	1st AC	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
13.4	2nd AC		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.5	DIT		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.6	B-Camera Crew		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.7	Additional Camera Tech		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.8	Steadycam Operator		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.9	VTR Assist		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.1.1	Camera Package	TBC	1 DAY	1	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
13.1.2	Additional Rentals	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
13.1.3	Dolly		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.1.4	Kit Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
13.1.5	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
Account Total						£3,850.00
14	ELECTRIC					
14.1	Gaffer		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
14.2	Best Boy Electric		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
14.3	Generator Operator		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
14.4	Electrics		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
14.5	Rigging Crew		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
14.6	Lighting Package	TBC	1 DAY	1	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
14.7	Day-Play Package		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
14.8	Generator Rental	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
14.9	Kit Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
14.1.1	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
Account Total						£2,000.00
15	GRIP					
15.1	Key Grip	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
15.2	Best Boy Grip		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.3	Dolly Grip		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.4	Grips		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.5	Rigging Crew		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.6	Grip Package		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.7	Day-Play Grip Package		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.8	Dolly Rental		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.9	Car Rigging		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.1.1	Kit Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
15.1.2	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
Account Total						£500.00
16	PRODUCTION SOUND					
16.1	Production Mixer	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
16.2	Boom Operator	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
16.3	Playback Operator		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
16.4	Sound Quality		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
16.5	Sound Equipment	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
16.6	Additional Rentals		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
16.7	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
Account Total						£1,850.00
17	SET OPERATIONS					
17.1	Set Medic	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
17.2	Craft Service		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
17.3	Craft Service Utilities		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
17.4	Craft Service Package		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
17.5	Unit Rentals/Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
17.6	Meals		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
17.8	Caterer		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
17.9	Walkie-Talkie Rental	TBC	1 DAY	1	£200.00	£200.00
17.1.1	Kit Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
17.1.2	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
Account Total						£1,050.00
18	COSTUME/WARDROBE					
18.1	Costume Designer	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
18.2	Wardrobe Supervisor		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
18.3	Costume Assistant	Student	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
18.4	First Set Costumer		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
18.5	Costume Shopper		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
18.6	Costume PA		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
18.7	Purchases/Rentals		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00

18.8	Cleaning	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
18.9	Kit Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
18.1.1	Damages	TBC	1 DAY	1	£150.00	£150.00
					Account Total	£2,000.00
19	HAIR/MAKEUP					
19.1	Key Makeup Artist	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
19.2	Key Hair Artist	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
19.3	Assistants		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
19.4	SFX Makeup	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
19.5	Hair/Makeup Expenses	TBC	1 DAY	1	£250.00	£250.00
19.6	Kit Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
19.7	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
					Account Total	£2,450.00
20	LOCATIONS					
20.1	Location Manager	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
20.2	Assistant Location Manager	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
20.3	Location Pas		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
20.4	Location Scout		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
20.5	Security	TBC	1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
20.6	Scouting Expenses	TBC	1 DAY	1	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
20.7	Site Rentals	TBC	1 DAY	1	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
20.8	Soundstage Rentals		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
20.9	Location Supplies		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
20.1.1	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
					Account Total	£4,350.00
TOTAL BELOW THE LINE PRODUCTION COSTS:						\$33,650.00
21	PRODUCTION STOCK/ DIGITIZING					
	Production Drives	TBC	1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Shipping	TBC	1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Downconversion		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Deck Rental		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	DVD Dailies	TBC	1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Additional Fees/ Tests		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
					Account Total	£0.00
22	PRODUCTION OVERHEAD					
	Legal Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Office Expenses		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Office Rent		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Production Insurance		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Workers Compensation		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Wrap Party/Gifts	TBC	1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
					Account Total	£0.00
23	EDITING					
	Editor	John Finnegan	1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Assistant Editor	Student	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
	Post Production Supervisor		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Editing Drives		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Editing Equipment		1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
	Working Meals		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
					Account Total	£1,000.00
24	DIGITAL CONFORM/ FINISH					
	Conform/Prep		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	DI		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	35MM Output		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	DCP Output		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	DVD Mastering		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Drives		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Messenger/Travel		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Screenings		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Cases/Reels		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
					Account Total	£0.00
25	POST-PRODUCTION SOUND					
	Sound Designer	TBC	1 DAY	1	£850.00	£850.00
	Additional Sound Editors	Student	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
	Foley Artists	TBC	1 DAY	1	£500.00	£500.00
	Additional Serves		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	ADR Stage	TBC	1 DAY	1	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
	Foley Stage	TBC	1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Mix		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Storage		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Dolby License		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Music and Effects Mix		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Working Meals		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
					Account Total	£3,850.00
26	MUSIC AND EFFECTS MIX					
	Composer	TBC	1 DAY	1	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
	Music Producer		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Music Clearance Supervisor		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Music Editor		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Musicians		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Rights and Clearances		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Studio Expenses		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Storage		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
					Account Total	£1,500.00
27	CGI/OPTICALS					
	CGI Package	TBC	1 DAY	1	£2,500.00	£2,500.00

	Rotoscoping		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Character Animation	TBC	1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Storage		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Stock Footage License		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Expendables		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Account Total					£2,500.00
28	TITLES					
	Opening/ End Credits					\$0.00
	Storage					
	Subtitles					
	Account Total					\$0.00
29	POST PRODUCTION OVERHEAD					
	Office Expenses					\$0.00
	Office Rent					
	Workers Compensation					
	Additional Legal Fees					
	Working Meals					
	Account Total					\$0.00
	TOTAL POST PRODUCTION COSTS:					\$8,850.00
30	GENERAL DISTRIBUTION LABOUR					
	Distribution Consultant					\$0.00
	Conventional Theatrical Booking					\$0.00
	Alternative Theatrical Consultant					\$0.00
	Distribution Assistant					\$0.00
	Producers Rep					\$0.00
	Account Total					\$0.00
31	DVD/BLURAY DISTRIBUTION					
	Fulfillment Company					\$0.00
	DVD Authoring					\$0.00
	DVD Replication					\$0.00
	Blu-Ray Authoring					\$0.00
	Blu-Ray Duplication					\$0.00
	Sleeves/Art Duplication					\$0.00
	Account Total					\$0.00
32	PUBLICITY					
	National Publicist		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Regional Publicist		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Press Screenings		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Press Kit		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Misc PR Expenses		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Web Design		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Web Hosting		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Festival Fees		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Publicity Packaging		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Account Total					£0.00
33	CREATIVE MATERIALS					
	Key Art Creative					\$0.00
	Graphic Design					
	Print Advertising Design					
	DVD Cover Design					
	Trailer Edit					
	EPK Edit					
	Account Total					\$0.00
34	PRINTING MATERIALS					
	Posters					\$0.00
	Misc. Promotional Printing					
	Account Total					\$0.00
008	THEATRE EXPENSES					
	35mm Print					\$0.00
	Trailer Blow-Up					
	Account Total					\$0.00
35	DIRECT MEDIA					
	Print Media		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	TV/ Radio Buys		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Web Advertising		1 DAY	1	£0.00	£0.00
	Account Total					£0.00
36	GENERAL OVERHEAD					
	Other Postage					£0.00
	Other Working Meals					
	Office Supplies					
	Mini Storage					
	Office Rent					
	Climate Vault					
	Account Total					£0.00
37	OTHER DELIVERY EXPENSES					
	E&O Insurance					£0.00
	Contract Copies					
	Additional Fees					
	Account Total					£0.00
38	Insurance	15% of Total				£0.00
39	Contingency / Petty Cash	10% of Production Costs				£0.00
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION/MARKETING COSTS:						£0.00
GRAND TOTAL:						£88,305.00

Appendix H
***At the Crossing* Writer's Guild of America Registration**

View Menu

WGA WEST REGISTRY



Documentation of Registration

PLEASE PRINT THIS PAGE FOR YOUR RECORDS

Registrant

Registrant: John Finbarr Finnegan

Author(s)

Author: John Finbarr Finnegan

At the Crossing

Registration Number: 1827712

MATERIAL TYPE:

FILE NAME: At the Crossing Draft 11.pdf

EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/1/2016

EXPIRATION DATE: 3/1/2021

Thank you for your registration. Your material has been successfully registered with the WGA West Registry. Registrations are valid for a term of five years and can be renewed upon expiration. Please note that changes cannot be made once your registration is completed.

Specific questions regarding your online transaction or registration records must be accompanied by photo ID.

Registrations are completed once the confirmation page appears. As a security precaution, this confirmation page can only be printed for your own records at the time of your online transaction. Your confirmation page cannot be returned to or saved.

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NEXT REGISTRATION

Appendix I
***Still Life* screenplay**

Still Life
by
John Finnegan

Story by
Ruth Hayes and John Finnegan

Draft 11
03/06/14

John Finnegan
john.finnegan247@gmail.com
00353 86 2151813

1 INT. KITCHEN - EVENING 1

A man in his late 60's, (FATHER), sits at a table and sketches on a sheet of paper with some charcoals.

The lines on the page take the form of the early stages of a self portrait. The man demonstrates great artistic skill, drawing from memory.

2 INT. DANCE STUDIO - CONTINUOUS 2

A young woman in her 30's. Earphones in her ears, and dressed in a tracksuit and a sweater. She wears a look of intense concentration as she warms up. This is OLIVIA.

3 KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 3

The man is lost in the moment - as if it were muscle memory guiding his hand.

A SHADOW moves passed in the background. He is not alone.

But he hesitates - as though his mind prevents him from continuing. His hand shakes, and he drops the charcoal on the table. He makes a fist, if only to stop the shaking.

4 DANCE STUDIO - CONTINUOUS 4

Olivia's entire body becomes stiff, as she rises, as if taking flight - her feet bending vertically until she is supporting her whole body on just the tips of her feet.

Using the mirror, Olivia monitors her movements carefully.

Until suddenly a SPECTOR passes by the door. It causes her to get flustered and she loses her concentration. Back on her feet again.

She takes off her sweater and throws it to one side, revealing a lean and muscular frame.

She turns off her phone, and presses play on her iPod.

Only Olivia can hear the music that now drives her, as she performs a free and spirited modern dance routine.

5 INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - LATER 5

Olivia is driving through the darkness, still listening to her iPod...

6 EXT. OLIVIA'S HOME - LATER 6

When she pulls into the drive of the two story house.

7 INT. OLIVIA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 7

Olivia sits in the car, letting the engine run for a moment as she absorbs the music coming from the earphones. She closes her eyes and loses herself.

Until the counter on the screen of her iPod counts to zero. The muffled music comes to a stop and she wakes again. She turns off the engine. SILENCE.

Taking off her earphones, she looks to a FLYER for a dance audition on the passenger's seat. She stares at it for a moment before pocketing it and going for the door.

8 LIVING ROOM 8

Olivia's father is sitting on his armchair, lost in the flickering light of the television.

OLIVIA (O.S.)
Dad I'm home.

A man is picking up plates and glasses from the floor. This is CALLUM; similar age to the father.

CALLUM
Hey 'Liv.

CALLUM (CONT'D)
(nudging the father)
The boss is home.

Callum enters the kitchen with the plates. Olivia passes behind her father, and kisses him on the head --

OLIVIA
Hey dad.

9 KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 9

Olivia drops her stuff by the table and takes a bottle of water from the fridge, as she browses the charcoal sketches on the table. Some of them are random, some are incomplete self portraits.

CALLUM
He was calling for you earlier.

She focuses on a SHARPENING BLADE on the table. Adjusts it carefully.

Callum puts the plates in the sink.

CALLUM (CONT'D)
I calmed him down.

He takes his coat from the chair and on his way out of the kitchen he stops next to Olivia --

CALLUM (CONT'D)
You know I don't mind sitting with him.
But how long more are we going to keep
kidding ourselves.

Callum leaves her with that to think about as he returns to the next room.

CALLUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Big fella?

CALLUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'll see you tomorrow.

FATHER (O.S.)
Ya Callum.

The SOUND of the FRONT DOOR closing. Olivia puts the drawings down again and returns her focus to the moment.

10

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

10

Olivia is in a different frame of mind now. Busying herself with household chores. She is wearing different clothes now, anything from the laundry pile thrown together.

OLIVIA
I want you to stop leaving your drawings
around for Callum to clean up.

FATHER
(distant)
He doesn't mind.

OLIVIA
Well I mind.

Olivia closes the curtains.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I don't like you using those sharpening
blades either. You don't need to use
charcoals you can use a pencil --

FATHER
Don't get like your mother Olivia, she's
always trying to change me --

Both arguing over each other --

<p>FATHER (CONT'D) You can't teach an old dog new tricks Olivia --</p>	<p>OLIVIA I'm not trying to change you, I'm looking out for you that's all.</p>
--	--

OLIVIA
 No charcoals that's all. I'm not saying
 you can't draw, just not --

FATHER
 Stay at home then.

Olivia stops herself and resumes cleaning --

OLIVIA
 What I do, I do because it's important to
 me. Once a week is all I ask.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 No more charcoals.

FATHER
 You should have stayed with the Vanguard.
 You could have been a teacher there.

OLIVIA
 Dad, you're doing your best to start a
 fight.

The man is silenced --

If only for a moment --

FATHER
 You're too old, that's the problem --

OLIVIA
 Dad!

Finally silenced.

Olivia stops - as if she has something to say but is
 hesitant to do so --

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 The Vanguard folded Dad.

Confusion in the old man --

FATHER
 When?

OLIVIA
 It doesn't matter. It was a long time
 ago.

The man seems puzzled and a little embarrassed --
 Olivia heartbroken --

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 C'mon dad.

FATHER
 I'm comfortable.

But Olivia turns off the television.

11 BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER 11

The man sits in the bathtub as Olivia, sleeves rolled up, gently washes his arm.

Olivia gets a towel ready, while the man takes the sponge and finishes cleaning himself.

She pulls the plug in the bath and the water starts to drain, as she helps him to his feet, wrapping a towel around him.

12 OLIVIA'S BEDROOM - LATER 12

Olivia adds the charcoal sketch to a collection of similar rubbings, equally as impressive, just as incomplete. All of them self portraits.

She takes one of the earliest drawings and compares it with the newest addition. What she finds is visual proof of her father's dementia.

13 MOMENTS LATER 13

Olivia is unpacking her training bag, when she finds the flier for the audition in her pocket and rather than throwing it away, goes to a cork-board and tacks it over a photograph.

On the cork-board: Photographs of Olivia at different ages. With her father, her MOTHER, a PARTNER, friends and colleagues. Indeed a visual time-line of her own life.

14 BATHROOM - LATER 14

A radio sits on the toilet seat, SLOW PIANO MUSIC emits from it.

Olivia is brushing her teeth and examining herself in the partially fogged mirror. Her hair is wet, and she wears a dressing gown.

Further down her body it becomes evident that she is also practicing a slow and methodical ballet technique, muscle memory is guiding her feet.

15 OLIVIA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 15

In her bedroom, the slightly faded music can be heard drowning out the muffled and INCOHERENT CRIES of her father down the hall.

16 KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY 16

The man carefully sketches a mug on a piece of paper. Olivia watches him from across the table, holding a mug of tea in her hand. Her father looks up at the mug --

But Olivia motions for him to keep his eyes on the drawing instead.

He adds a little extra detail and is finished.

Olivia pushes a picture across the table, and the father turns it over to reveal a picture of a mug. His sketch doesn't make for a good match.

FATHER

This is a waste of time.

Olivia prepares a new blank page.

OLIVIA

Again.

FATHER

No.

OLIVIA

It's exercise.

FATHER

There's nothing wrong with me.

OLIVIA

Why are you fighting me on this? Just draw the cup.

The man reluctantly picks up the pencil and tries to draw. He starts off fine, before coming to a hesitant stop. As if external forces were preventing his hand from constructing the lines.

Olivia can see he has been beaten. And he can see it as well. It is a rude awakening...

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Dad.

He puts down the pencil again, as if embarrassed.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
It's okay.

Neither speak for a moment.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I think it might be time to get some real help.

The father carefully puts down the utensil, processing the information. Olivia can sense this has struck a nerve --

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
What do you think?

Nothing...

FATHER
If that's what you think is best.

Olivia smiles.

OLIVIA
Okay. I'm glad you feel that way.

Olivia is quietly hopeful. Then his expression changes for the better. He is smiling for the first time in a while. Genuine happiness from both.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
I think we need a break. Let's take the rest of the day off, what do ya say?

Olivia gets up and starts clearing the table. The father sits and watches, as the smile leaves again...

17

MARINA - LATER

17

Olivia and her father walk arm in arm through the marina.

FATHER
I could make a run for it --

He looks to her for a smile. Olivia welcomes this light hearted moment and gestures for him to "go for it".

He links her arm, and Olivia pushes closer to her father and rests her head on his shoulder as they walk.

The SOUND of a CHILD PLAYING.

18

LATER

18

Olivia and her father sit and eat from tubs of ice cream as they watch a YOUNG GIRL (6) playing with her MOTHER by the water.

The moment speaks to Olivia.

It resonates in her father also.

19

MOMENTS LATER

19

The ice cream gone now. The child is gone too. Just father and daughter.

FATHER

She didn't leave because of you y'know.

OLIVIA

I know.

FATHER

She left because she had enough. Because of me. I was no good to any of ye, she deserved better.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Do you talk to her?

Olivia shakes her head.

The man nods.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Olivia I don't know how much time --

OLIVIA

Dad --

FATHER

I know you think I never approved of the life you made for yourself, but you're wrong. I only ever wanted the best for you.

FATHER (CONT'D)

You're doing a good job. Better than I ever did.

Olivia is visibly upset, despite staying strong.

FATHER (CONT'D)

I used to wish that one day I'd wake up and you'd be gone, back to your old life. Away from all this. But you didn't. You stayed.

FATHER (CONT'D)

And now here you are, and I know maybe
tomorrow I'll wake up and I won't
recognize you anymore -- my own daughter.

A tear rolling down the side of Olivia's face. She
brushes it away.

He looks to his daughter for forgiveness. Olivia, now
more conflicted and hurting than before, gives him the
slightest of nods.

20 OLIVIA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

20

Olivia is still wearing her jacket, as she studies an
old photograph of her FATHER AND MOTHER during happier
times.

She takes off her jacket, when suddenly she HEARS a
SHATTERING SOUND downstairs.

21 KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

21

Olivia comes rushing to find a broken glass on the ground
by the table, and a puddle of water around the broken
shards.

OLIVIA

Dad, are you okay?

Then she sees his bloodied hand --

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Dad!

He notices it too --

FATHER

I was sharpening my charcoals and I must
have --

She comes to his side to assess the extent of the
injury. A small cut, in need of disinfecting and a
bandage.

OLIVIA

It's these stupid drawings. Dad you
have to give up this obsession.

She goes for the medicine cabinet and retrieves a
plaster. She turns on the tap --

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

Come here.

FATHER
Just leave me be --

The man pulls back, becoming more withdrawn --

OLIVIA
Dad, I have to clean this --

FATHER
(outburst)
Get away!

He pushes Olivia backwards, knocking the photograph out of her hand. Olivia is stopped from falling by the table behind her.

He backs away, clutching his bleeding finger. He can see what he's done, tears welling in his eyes, the sight of blood smeared on both hands terrifies him --

FATHER (CONT'D)
You stay away from me.

OLIVIA
It's just me Dad.

FATHER
I need to do my work.

But the bleeding doesn't stop, and it only causes him to grow more anxious and upset.

A drop of blood spills to the floor - it dilutes in the puddle of water. The man is lost in the image of the red tinge that is his blood, everything that makes him unique - all his strengths and all his weakness - fading away in the water.

He snaps back to reality and looks to the woman before him.

Olivia is doing her level best to stay strong, even as tears come through, watching her father at his worst...

There is a hint of anger in his gaze --

OLIVIA
Dad?

Olivia is heartbroken at the image of the man before him. He is not her father.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
It's me. Olivia.

22 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

22

Callum is helping out around the house, while the father works on what appears to be the beginnings of another deformed self portrait.

Olivia is hovering at the door, her coat on and her gearbag in hand. She watches him at the table - helpless. The man is lost in his exercises.

CALLUM
He'll be fine.

OLIVIA
He doesn't remember me.

CALLUM
He remembers you.

Olivia isn't convinced.

CALLUM (CONT'D)
It can be like a prison.

CALLUM (CONT'D)
It can make you feel trapped and scared. If you let it.

He picks up the last of the clothes --

OLIVIA
How do you know?

CALLUM
I know.

OLIVIA
I don't think he feels trapped.

CALLUM
A prison for you I mean.

Olivia looks to Callum.

He leaves the room, and she contemplates his words as she turns to her father once more.

23 OLIVIA'S CAR - NIGHT

23

Olivia driving in the night.

24 KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

24

Callum sharpens a charcoal pencil and leaves it next to the man, watching as the father continues his drawing, the lines making more sense now than before.

25 OLIVIA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 25

The collage of photographs reveal a similar picture of Olivia as a child dancing on stage - a long time ago during happier times.

Further down the cork-board the flier for the audition has been torn off - only the corner of it remaining on the board.

26 OLIVIA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 26

In Olivia's car, the remainder of the flier rests on the passenger's seat.

27 KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 27

The father keeps drawing, making greater progress than before. It is clear now that he is drawing from memory, a memory of Olivia as a girl.

Callum grins.

28 INT. THEATRE, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS 28

Olivia is surrounded by other YOUNGER DANCERS as they stretch and prepare for their audition. Olivia takes a moment to take in the competition.

29 INT. THEATRE - CONTINUOUS 29

Olivia stands before THE DIRECTOR, DANCE INSTRUCTOR, and other members of the production.

Olivia begins dancing, demonstrating natural grace and poise. She makes it look easy.

Until she buckles, and her moves become stiffly, tentatively. She doubts herself, and she stops.

The panel have seen people flunk out like this all morning. Olivia isn't going to be one of these people.

OLIVIA

I'm sorry. I can do better.

She recomposes herself - tenses, takes a breath and is just about to move when --

DIRECTOR

Take your time. You're ok.

Olivia gives a polite smile.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
There's plenty of time.

OLIVIA
I'm just -- I don't know what happened, I
had it and then --

DIRECTOR
That's okay. We'll wait.

Olivia freezes upon hearing this. In that moment,
everything is behind her.

INT. THEATRE, CORRIDOR - LATER

Some dancers are packing their things, the place is near
empty.

Olivia is walking away when --

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Olivia!

Olivia stops at the end of the corridor as the director
comes hurrying to her.

They speak for a moment - inaudible. Olivia drops her bag
-- she hesitantly hugs the director.

The director shakes her hand and returns back up the
corridor - a pleasant smile on her face.

Olivia is left alone again in the corridor - she slowly
picks up her bag again, hesitant in her movement, slow to
let go of the theatre.

INT. OLIVIA'S HOME, KITCHEN - LATER

Olivia is watching her father as he finishes what is now
a near perfect image of Olivia.

Olivia deep in thought, her eyes transfixed.

The man is lost in his work, as though unaware Olivia is
even there.

FATHER
So?

OLIVIA
What?

Olivia resumes cleaning Callum's mess.

FATHER
(still drawing)
How did it go?

OLIVIA
I didn't get it. They said I was too old.

The father finishes smearing the charcoal on the image.
Then suddenly his hand finds its way to Olivia's face.

The father is perplexed, lost in the image.

Olivia sees her father touching the face of girl in the image.

She kisses him on the head and takes away more of the ware.

FATHER
You should have stayed with the Vanguard.

Olivia looks back to him from the other side of the room.

OLIVIA
You're right.

End.

CLOSING CREDITS OVER A FLASHBACK OF OLIVIA'S AUDITION.

A PERFECT PERFORMANCE.

Appendix J
***Still Life* blog post**

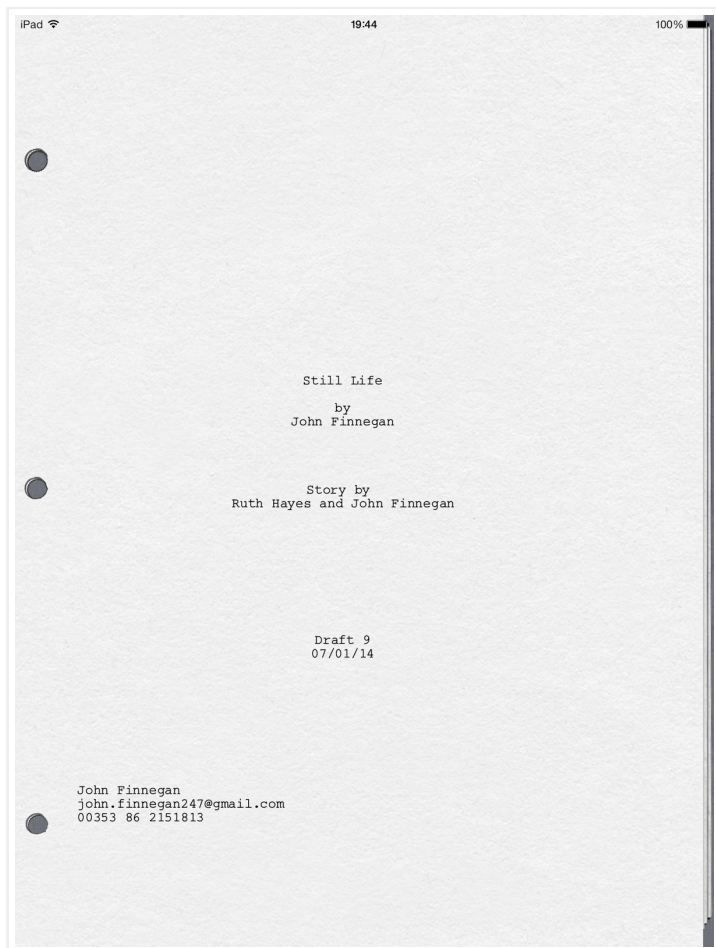


Please Return to the Script Dept.

Saturday, February 22, 2014

Still Life Screenplay Sample

Some sample pages of the script for our short film... Enjoy!



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Links

- Vexentricity
- Motion Graphic Solutions by John Finnegan

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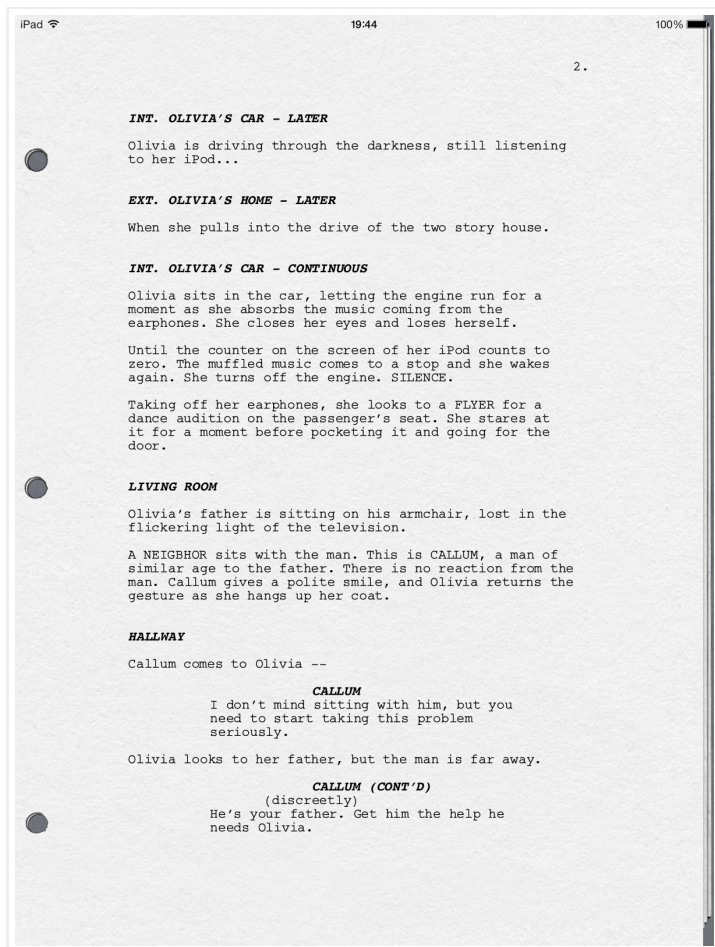
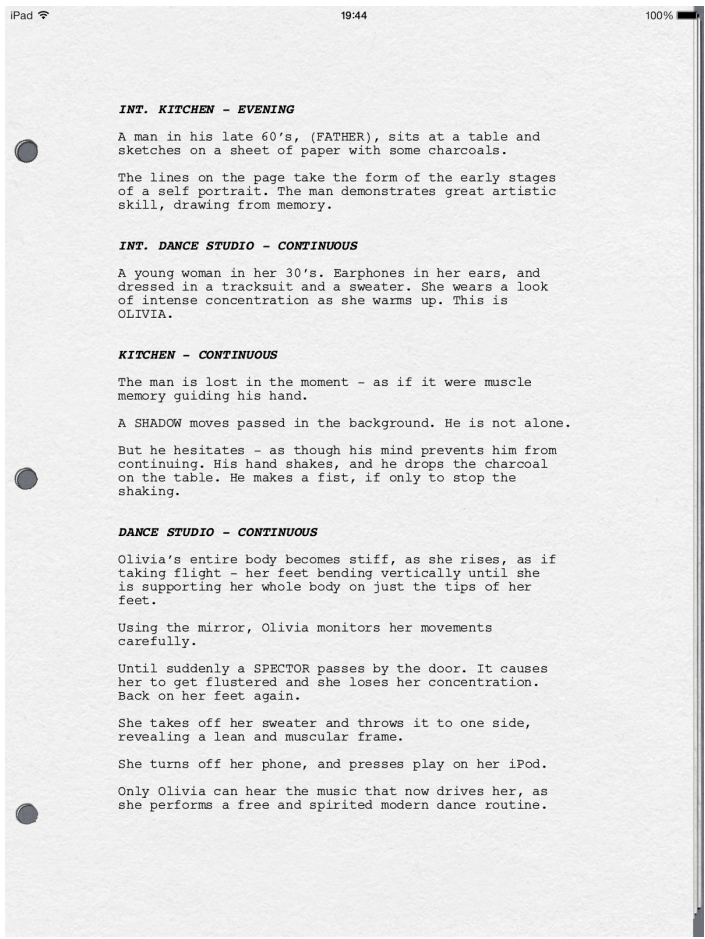
Blog Archive

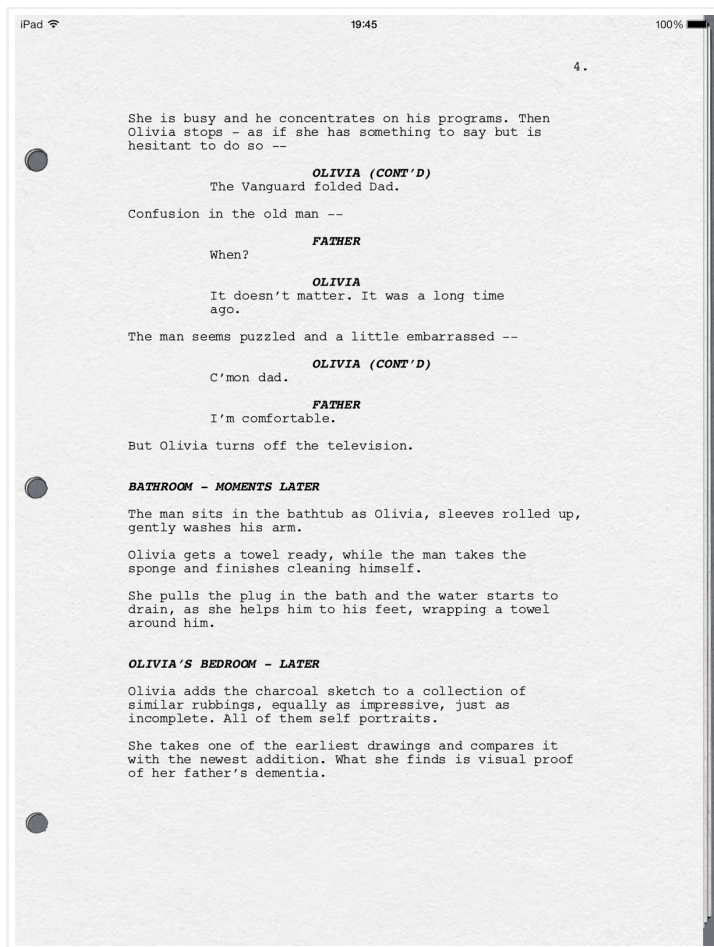
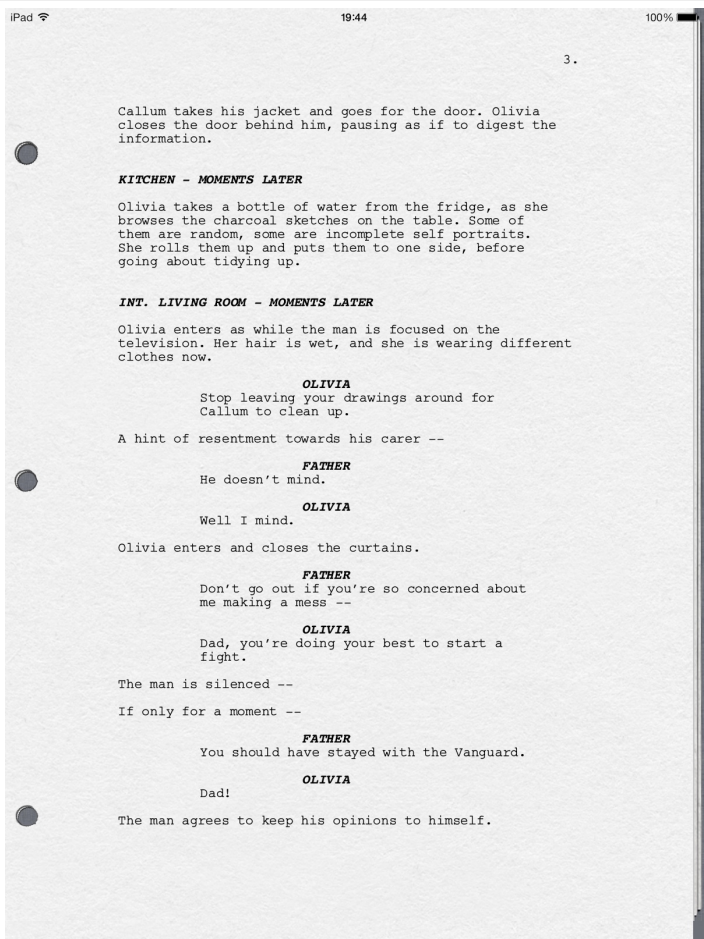
- 2015 (2)
- ▼ 2014 (9)
 - August (3)
 - June (2)
 - May (3)
 - ▼ February (1)
 - Still Life
Screenplay
Sample
- 2013 (8)
- 2012 (29)
- 2011 (43)

Pages

- Home

Irish Blogs





Be sure to pledge to our fundraiser [here](#) and see the full story! Many thanks.

Posted by **John** at 7:59 AM

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Appendix K
***Still Life* Indiegogo campaign page**

Still Life

Cork, Ireland Film

Story Updates 0 Comments 0 Backers 15

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"Still Life" is a short drama about a turning point in the lives of a father and daughter, as they cope with dementia.



Catherine Crowley



Film
Cork
Ireland
4 Team Members

Contact See More Details

"A story about spirit, defiance, and beauty."

What is This Film About?

"Still Life" is a short drama about a turning point in the lives of a father and daughter, as they cope with dementia. One struggles to maintain civility in the household, as time runs out for the other, and throughout, their relationship is put to the test one last time. The result of their journey is for the first time, seeing, understanding, and appreciating the role they play in each other's life.

This Indiegogo campaign will enable us to complete principal photography this Spring. Funds raised beyond our initial goal will go to first phase post production, marketing and promotional fees. These are all critical steps that will give our film the best possible chance on the film festival circuit..

"Still Life is a touching story which needs to be told. We are really looking forward to bringing this beautiful story to life and sharing it with everyone."

Check out a sample of the script [here](#) and see for yourself!

Who We Are:

The team at Still Life have been busy making popular and award winning films and productions in Ireland for over ten years. Whether putting our skills to use in front of or behind the camera, alone or as a team, one thing has always remained the same - our commitment to telling great stories.

We've built a reputation in Ireland and abroad for bringing visual flair and gripping and ambitious storytelling to everything we do - theatre, documentaries, digital projects and both short and feature films. It's important to us to push the quality of our work with each new and exciting project.

So now that you know what we do, it's time to meet the team:

303

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€1,245 EUR
raised in 1 month

21% funded No time left

€6,000 EUR goal
Flexible Funding

CAMPAIGN CLOSED
This campaign ended on April 21, 2014

SELECT A PERK

€10 EUR

Thank you!

Many thanks for making this film possible. Email updates & invitations to screenings coming your way, as well as your name on our Honor Roll.

5 claimed

€25 EUR

Digital Postcard / Honor Roll

Heartfelt thanks and a digital postcard from the set; your name on our website Honor Roll; and our genuine gratitude, & commitment to keep you in the loop as we proceed.

0 claimed

€50 EUR

Digital Copy of the Film

A DIGITAL COPY of the completed film with a personalised thank you from the Director; a place on our honor roll of thanks through our various social media outlets. Stay tuned!

1 claimed

€75 EUR

Press Pack

Receive an exclusive digital press pack as part of our film festival marketing campaign. Digital copies of posters, behind the scenes photography, and more, plus a digital copy of the film to boot!

0



Director **Oisín Mac Coille**

Oisín Mac Coille, has been directing films and music videos for the past ten years. He studied T.V and Film in his native Cork City before a job in the Ros na Run Art Department meant he had to move to Galway.

A huge fan of the works of Shane Meadows, Ken Loach, and Michael Winterbottom, Oisín's style is minimalist realism, he tries to observe "the character in as natural a state as possible".



His work has been shown in the official selections of film festivals locally, nationally and internationally. In 2013 he was nominated at the "DareMedia Underground Short Film Festival" for best music video for "Shakier" His work has also been broadcast to the United States via Anlar.tv a web based broadcasting company.

Oisín has directed for Tg4's Flag ship soap Ros Na Run, a challenge he was both "honored and proud" to rise to.

Oisín is a native Irish speaker and does his best to promote the language on set if not on screen.



Actor **Ruth Hayes**

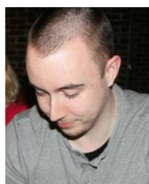
Ruth Hayes has been working as an actor for the past 10 years. Although her stage experience goes back to the tender age of 5, we won't disclose how long ago that was!

Ruth has worked on both stage and screen productions, and has appeared in several features and short films which have gone on to both play and garner awards in film festivals around the world.



Ruth has studied acting with many mentors with whom she holds in high regard. Most recently she studied with award winning writer and director Terry McMahon.

She has also turned her hand to writing and has just completed a residency in the Theatre Development Centre, Cork, where she wrote and performed in the performance piece WHISPERS.



Screenwriter **John Finnegan**

Hurry limited number available.

Also, a DIGITAL COPY of the film and a place on our honor roll of thanks via our social media outlets. We so appreciate you stepping up to be a part of this project.

0 claimed

€100 EUR

DVD of the Film & more...

Receive a personalized DVD of the film from the cast and crew, as well as a digital press pack from our marketing campaign. And of course, a big THANK YOU on our social media outlets.

Hurry limited availability.

0 claimed

€150 EUR

Screenplay/ Screen Credit

Receive a printed copy of the screenplay direct from the set. On top of this you will also receive a digital postcard as a measure of our profound gratitude. And to top it off, you'll get a thank you credit on the final film! Limited supply!

0 out of 10 claimed

€250 EUR

1:1 Workshop/ Q&A

A 60min Q&A skype session with our lead actor Ruth Hayes, director Oisín MacCoille, or screenwriter John Finnegan. This is a great opportunity for anyone looking to learn about the craft of acting or filmmaking. COMES WITH ALL PREVIOUS REWARDS!

0 out of 10 claimed

€500 EUR

Premier Invite

For this amazing contribution to our project, you will receive a heartfelt thank-you letter from our team as well as an invitation for you and a guest to the premier for a chance to meet the filmmakers in person!

Plus ALL PREVIOUS REWARDS

0 out of 10 claimed

€750 EUR

Memorabilia/ Premier Invite

One of the exciting aspects of this production is getting to work with such talented artists and designers to help bring the story to life.

As part of our heartfelt thanks, you will receive a genuine piece of artwork from the film. These are rare pieces, unique to the production, and in limited stock. Don't delay!

You will also receive two tickets to the premier of the film and ALL PREVIOUS REWARDS

0 out of 5 claimed

€1,000 EUR

303

0

303

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John Finnegan has been actively involved in the film industry in Ireland for the last ten years. He started out his career as an apprentice assistant director before studying film production in Cork. Here he met fellow Still Life producers Ruth Hayes and Osin MacCoille.

After working in the stock industry for several years, John went to Bournemouth University in the UK to do his MA in screenwriting. Since then he has worked extensively between Ireland and the United States, acting as a script consultant for various production companies.

Currently he teaches video game design at Bangor University in Wales, while also pursuing a PhD in screenwriting.

What is Indiegogo?

Indiegogo is a new form of commerce and patronage. Every month, many thousands of people pledge millions to creative projects. Through this web site, you can give money that will help finance our project, "Still Life," in exchange for a variety of rewards, screen credits, our gargantuan gratitude - and the knowledge that you will be helping to bring to life a very real story that touches us all...

This Indiegogo campaign ends late April. So it's important to respond soon, and please send a link to anybody else in your circle who might be interested. Thank you!

You've exceeded your original goal, now what? Can I still be a part of this?

An emphatic YES. We will be thrilled to reach our original goal which reflects a bare minimum budget to complete principal photography and general post production. But this is only half the battle. Achieving our stretch goal will allow us to go forward with marketing and promotion, as well as starting this film on the best possible road come festival season.

And even if you can't donate to the project that's okay, you can show your support for this wonderful story by spreading the word among your own circles. Thank you for going that extra mile!

New to Indiegogo? Here's how the process works.

A person who supports a project is called a "backer." The process of giving money to the film production is called a "pledge." In return for your pledge, we (the creators of the campaign) are able to offer "rewards," depending on the amount you pledge.

When will I be able to see the film?

Our target is to complete the film in Summer 2014. We'll keep our backers updated every step of the way. In the meantime...

- Watch our [promo video](#) listed above...
- Follow [John Finnegan's blog](#) for week by week updates...
- Check out [Osin MacCoille's official site](#) to see other work by the team.

Are there other ways to get involved, help out & get in touch? Yes.

- If you're on Facebook, Twitter, or you have a blog, email list, friends who would be interested in this project, please reach out.
- Find us on most social media outlets as well. (Links below)
- Or drop us a line: still.life.shortfilm@gmail.com

Find This Campaign On



Facebook



Twitter

Associate Producer Credit

This is your chance to have your name in lights. For your support you will be given an Associate Producer credit on the film, and be kept in the loop throughout the promotional campaign. This is a chance to become one of the team.

You will also receive TWO TICKETS TO THE PREMIER, and ALL PREVIOUS REWARDS as a show of our gratitude!

1 out of 5 claimed

Do you think this campaign contains prohibited content? [Let us know.](#)

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LANGUAGE

English

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Appendix L
Links to video content

***Still Life* Film**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yJ0e9SlpJo&feature=youtu.be>

***Still Life* Indiegogo campaign video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcEK7YFY2wM>

***At the Crossing* visual pitch video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKpo5sFbZE0>