



# viewfinder

Nov/Dec 2013

NZ'S MAG FOR INDIE FILM, VIDEO & WEB TV CREATORS-AND THEIR FANS



**DOCO MAKING:** BEARD CHRONICLES



**CASE STUDY:** MAKING DEADSET FOR TROPFEST



**INDIE FILMMAKING** ON A SHOESTRING



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**Welcome** to our last issue of Viewfinder for the year. It's been a big year for us; re-launching the Viewfinder website and magazine (print and digital); and we've just launched the new NZ Web Series Channel; check it out at **[www.webserieschannel.co.nz](http://www.webserieschannel.co.nz)**.

We've profiled many New Zealand web series over the past year here in the Viewfinder mag and we realised these various series are hard to find; they're scattered all over the internet and that wasn't helping their creators find audiences. We believed New Zealand web series needed a home, a central hub so audiences can find them all in one place. So we created one – it's taken months of (unfunded) hard work but we're delighted that now audiences can easily watch and discover web series created by innovative and talented Kiwis.

NZ On Air has funded four more web series in its latest round of funding (from over 50 applications), including further seasons for *Flat3* and *High Road* (both already featured here in Viewfinder magazine). Next year is shaping up to be an exciting time for web series in New Zealand.

I hope your short film entries for Tropfest 2014 are going swimmingly! **Entries close 6 January** at [www.tropfest.co.nz](http://www.tropfest.co.nz). We have lots of articles in this issue about short filmmaking to encourage you towards finishing your entry.

*Fiona*

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@NZviewfinder

P.S. We are proud to be a media partner for The Outlook for Someday where young people create short films about sustainability issues. I was honoured to present the Viewfinder Cinematography Award at the Awards Evening recently. I recommend checking out the winning films on our site: [www.viewfinder.co.nz](http://www.viewfinder.co.nz) to be inspired by our young filmmaking talent.

# Find it all at: [viewfinder.co.nz](http://viewfinder.co.nz)

FOR INDIE AND EMERGING FILMMAKERS & VIDEO CREATORS

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# viewfinder

Viewfinder is a magazine and network for NZ creators of indie film, video and web TV.  
(And their fans)

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# CASE STUDY: SHOOTING THE SHORT FILM **DEADSET**

Aidan Dickens is entering the Tropfest NZ 2014 short film festival with a short crafted specifically for the festival.

Viewfinder follows his progress on the shoot for a behind the scenes view.

## ENTERING TROPFEST

I'm always looking for excuses to make something and I'd heard about the Tropfest competition while at Film School last year. I hadn't had a chance to enter then, so thought we should do something for this round.

## THE IDEA FOR THE SHORT

I've always wanted to do a road trip story with two characters who are completely different sharing the ride. In this case we had a nerdy guy and a goth chick meeting in the middle of nowhere and a relationship evolving as they share the ride together. This story was originally more romantic but after my last film I knew we had to raise the stakes, so I evolved it into something a lot darker and grittier, which seems to be normal for my films nowadays.

## THE SYNOPSIS

Marcus is driving along a country road when he sees Daria hitch hiking and picks her up. They are complete opposites but share something in common; they're both running away from something.

## THE SCRIPT

I wrote the script and had Vanessa James as my script consultant, who really helped to hone it into its final form.

## PREP FOR THE SHOOT

Normally I just use shotlists. I have done storyboards in the past but they are rarely very useful, so we stick to the shotlist. I usually do call sheets as well. Facebook is the best way to organise crew I've found, because you can create a group page, add all the crew and then post messages and updates that everyone sees, simple.



## SCRIPT READ THROUGH

We did a script read through with cast and crew so we were all on the same page. Everyone needs to know the story so at any time they know what scene we're shooting and where we are story wise. It really helps to keep everyone involved as well so we work better as a team.

## THE CREW

We have a small crew and it's made up of friends and family who love being involved and helping out. On this shoot we had myself as writer/director/producer, David Peterson as DOP, Holden Schade as Sound Op and Alex Arruda producing along with Vanessa James, who was also Production manager and script consultant, plus she also provided snacks and some really awesome homemade cookies. Then we had my brother Liam and my wife Milla doing clapper and assisting on different days, and Donna Rae doing makeup, which is hugely important for this shoot. We also had Michael Nicholas providing the generator, he's also one of the actors, and John Crews helped out as well, he is the founder of the Kennedy Park trust, which is where we shot some of the short.

## THE CAST

There are three actors in this film, Rebecca Parr and Michael Nicholas are friends from previous shoots and the other was John Edwards, who I auditioned. My films require a lot from the actors and I use people I know can act well and pull off what's required. I like to try new people as well, and in particular when a character has a particular look, which in this case John had and it all worked out perfectly.

## PAYMENT

Unfortunately no one gets paid - it is a small shoot with a micro budget. I do however give fuel vouchers to everyone as a form of payment, plus food, and I'll organise a big wrap party for it.

## LOCATIONS

We had three locations this time instead of just one, which is what we had on my last film. For the first location we just used my bedroom, which worked perfectly. My house is very old and so it makes a really good filming location, which is why I've shot in there a few times. The second location is the road in Coatsville that Kim Dot Com lives on, this wasn't too hard to find; we just needed somewhere secluded. The third was the Kennedy Park tunnels and carpark in Castor Bay. We needed somewhere dark and spooky and I'd already met John Crews before when scouting for other films, so I contacted him and he said okay.

*The film had to be just over six minutes in order to get the titles and credits in, so I had to be particularly brutal with the cutting.*

## THE GEAR

Our DOP David Peterson used the following gear:

- Camera: hacked Panasonic GH1 (mostly more often than not shooting at ISO200, 1/50th shutter speed, and f/2.8, but this varied of course a lot over the course of the shoot, though those were the most common settings overall I'd estimate) & Canon ELPH 100 (running Canon Hack Development Kit)
- Lenses: Vivitar Series 1 28-90mm f/2.8-3.5 Nikon F mount, and Panasonic 14mm f/2.5 pancake (plus cleaning equipment of blower and lens cloth).
- Rigging: monopod, fluid head, tripod, Varavon Sling Follow Focus, mini ball head, 2x quick release plates, suction mount, shoulder rig, flat sided IKEA egg timer, rope, screwdrivers.
- Reference sound: SG-108 microphone or on camera mics on occasion.
- With the most common setup being the GH1 with the Vivitar Series 1 on the monopod with a fluid head plus the SG-108 on the hotshoe, with 2x 250W worklights. ►



## SOUND & LIGHTING

- Sound: Holden, the sound guy, used a Fostex FR-2 Field Memory Recorder that I bought off Trademe from a guy in Wellington. Interestingly enough it is the same one that was used on *King Kong* and *The Lovely Bones*. I also have a Rode boom pole and shotgun mic along with a deadcat.
- Lighting: 4x 250W work floodlights from SuperCheap Auto, with two mounted on each lightstand, many many meters of extension cords (with multi-way plugs too), plus two 60W desk lamps (so a total of over a thousand watts of light). Along with whatever ambient light there was in the setting, such as indoor room lights and sunlight. Also made use of a 110cm reflector (dual sided gold and silver).

## MAKEUP

Donna is our makeup artist and used Minifies Stage Blood; Kryolan Fresh Scratch Blood; Ben Nye Bruise Wheel; Maybelline Charcoal Black Eyeliner; Wendy Hill Foundation; Thin Lizzy contour and a black lipstick.

*A sheep gave birth in a paddock next to us while we were filming the first half of the scene which made everyone smile.*

## SHOOT DIARY

### DAY ONE

Today we started shooting our Tropfest film. The scene we were doing was shot in my bedroom and it took us just over four hours to get it all set up. We had a list of 18 shots, all vital to the scene. As per usual with most shoots it took awhile to get into it, but after a few takes we started working like a well oiled machine. We did between three and eight takes per shot and managed to get the most out of our cast and crew. The main issues for me today were keeping the crew under control and keeping everyone focused.

I find that as a director it is invaluable to have a shotlist

done in advance otherwise you're basically feeling around in the dark trying to improvise the shots. We block through the scene and mould the shotlist to the action and the actors movements and the whole process becomes very organic, but it is imperative to have some idea of what the shots will be and how much you will need to get enough coverage of the scene.

I am a very actor friendly director and spend a lot of time working closely with the actors in order to create a believable performance together. Without the actors we have no film, so I place a lot of importance on the relationship with the actors. Having an idea about what through lines the characters have for each scene really helps, these can change as you go along and you have to be prepared to mould and sculpt the performance to fit the scene.

The lighting was very important for today's scene. David was the DOP on my last shoot and he's very good at lighting. We end up with very stylised, dark, shadowy, spooky shots. All of my films seem to have this look now and I really like it.

We used the notebook today. Lee Ah Yen designed it as one of the props in the film. Lee is an actor who's been in two of my previous films. He's a great actor and also a really good artist, and although there was no acting part for him in this film he still did all the drawings in the notebook we used, which looked amazing.

### DAY TWO

Shooting on the side of the road in Coatsville proved to be less challenging than I'd thought but more complicated in terms of what we had to shoot. The shots required the driver to pick up a hitchhiker, which is easy enough in theory but finding the right spot to do it on a Sunday when there was a bike race was the challenge. We finally found the spot and started filming. There were many challenges with the car having to drive off and come back again for each take and watching for traffic and people when shooting.

Other challenges included the sound in the car, which our soundie Holden handled very well, and getting good shots. Apart from that it was mostly hassle free. A sheep gave birth in a paddock next to us while we were filming the first half of the scene which made everyone smile, we even got some footage. ►





The main thing I noticed with shooting outside in a car in daylight, versus inside is the lack of control over lighting. The day before we managed to create some beautiful lighting effects and an atmosphere that was strikingly beautiful, whereas outside in a small car we really had no control as all we could fit in the car was a camera operator, director and soundie, plus the two actors, so lighting really went out the window. Another challenge was getting the actors to do what I wanted them to do. This short has minimal dialogue and so the actors had certain actions to do that were very minimal, exchanging looks and one of them also had to drive on a windy road, so it was a bit challenging, but we got there.

We drove past Kim Dot Com's house around 20 times as we were shooting on that road and I promised the DOP we would stop so he could take a photo of himself in front of it, which was cool. Seeing the giant "Mega" on his lawn was definitely a highlight.

### DAY THREE

Shooting in some old WW2 army tunnels in Castor Bay today proved to be more tricky than I had imagined. For a start there were builders next door who were nice enough to give some free power for our lights, but weren't able to be quiet while we were filming unfortunately. The contrast in the types of lighting in the tunnel and from the outside was also a big issue that we had to deal with.

Our DOP uses Hi Wattage work lights that have no barn doors. I was more used to redheads or any other type of traditional film lights, and so this was a bit of a change for me. The results speak for themselves though and we end up with some very unconventional and amazing lighting once again.

The main challenges today were the sheer amount of shots we had scheduled, which was about 22, and getting them all done on time. The tunnels are pitch black in some parts so we had to choose the right location where we could control the lights and justify the light source, which we eventually did. Echo in the tunnels was another big issue and the soundie once again came out on top for that one. We also had John Crews helping us out today by redirecting traffic while we were shooting in the carpark, and providing any help or assistance

we needed as well.

The crew and actors were on form today. I can't give these guys enough credit for what they've put themselves through for no money. The screen industry is changing, however as long as we have passionate people who are willing to work for free then high quality productions will still get made, and that seems to be the way things are going.

We finally wrapped after 10 hours of shooting and called it a day with a well rounded, if very tired sound 'yay!'.


### EDITING

This part of the filmmaking process is always fun. I'm an experienced editor and always edit my own films and music videos, or whatever else I'm shooting, and this was no exception. It's taken me two weeks to do a cut I'm happy with and lock it off.

The biggest challenge with editing for a film competition like this is the time limit. For Tropfest it's seven minutes with titles and credits, which is tough when you want to

*Without the actors we have no film, so I place a lot of importance on the relationship with the actors.*

convey a story about two characters and show the relationship growing and developing, and have a twist in the end that you want audiences to understand and appreciate. I found this particularly tough as the film had to be just over six minutes in order to get the titles and credits in, so I had to be particularly brutal with the cutting and make everything happen as quickly as possible without compromising the story.

We also have the issue of getting an M rated film for this particular competition, and since I've never had to think about ratings before on my films then this will be interesting. We have an F word, which may have to be bleeped, plus a shooting, a violent conflict, a bit of strangling, and a little blood. We shall see what happens with the final edit. 



(short filmmaking)

# SHOOTING FOR SUCCESS

Tropfest short film festival winners share the making of their short films

By Tui Ruwhiu





TARANAKI  
**TROPFEST**  
**NEW ZEALAND**  
THE WORLD'S LARGEST SHORT FILM FESTIVAL  
TSB BOWL OF BROOKLANDS • 16 FEB 2014



## TROPFEST WINNING FILMMAKER DAVE SMITH AND HIS SHORT 'CAPPUCCINO TANGO'

Filmmaker Dave Smith had made a number of shorts and had originally considered entering Tropfest in Australia. When Tropfest came to New Zealand, and even better to his home town of New Plymouth, he decided it was time to go for it.

Dave charmed the judges and many in the audience at the 2013 Tropfest NZ Short Film Festival with his winning mini-operatic entry '*Cappuccino Tango*'. The amusing and entertaining premise for this short sees cafe patrons operatically extolling their favourite 'real' coffees and reacting in shock horror when new arrivals order something different. Amidst the coffee snobbery, two decaf soy latte lovers discover each other and tango to their own tune.

'*Cappuccino Tango*' won Dave an all-expenses paid trip to LA to spend four days in an immersion workshop learning about how the Hollywood industry works from insiders, including a day at the American Film Market (AFM). Here is how Dave got there.

### THE TEAM

Dave is a musician and his wife Nicci is an amateur dramatics enthusiast. After arriving in New Plymouth from Scotland in 2002 with their three children, Dave and Nicci embedded themselves in the local music and theatre scenes. That is where they discovered their film collaborators. They have a close team of six that they had made seven other shorts with prior to '*Cappuccino Tango*'. Each has a key role, but they share the workload for the whole production. To keep costs down they seek to make what they can't borrow, including their own camera rigs.

### THE SCRIPT

There are only four lines of dialogue in '*Cappuccino Tango*', so script wasn't the main driver. In the middle of 2012, musician Andy Bassett brought Dave a demo track of a song he had been working on and mooted the idea of filming a mini-opera. Dave could visualise the short, so he quickly storyboarded the whole film - Dave has never been schooled in filmmaking, and believes it's his ability to see things in pictures that has helped his directing. Over the next four months Dave focused primarily on casting while Andy continued to work on the music.

### THE TALENT

Dave felt that the characters in the film needed to be quirky. He broke down the roles into male and female parts, and then sat down with partner Nicci who is a theatre director to draw up a list of all the actors they knew. They then began matching actors to roles, with Nicci's theatre colleague and co-producer of the film Joe Fuller also contributing his thoughts. In the four months leading up to the shoot day, they filled the thirty roles from their original list apart from two. Dave arranged for each of the cast to get a copy of the song so that they could practise their part, as there wouldn't be rehearsals.

While Dave concentrated on finalising the actors, Andy was casting singers to sing the roles. He pre-recorded them and did a complete mix of the song. This delivered the track for the actors to lip-synch to on the shoot day.

### THE SHOOT

Getting the 30 cast members together on one day was the biggest logistical problem Dave and his team faced. With two experienced tango dancers required, Dave looked to local ballroom dancer Davina Moffat. Unfortunately, Davina's dancing partner Jeff Richards was from Auckland, so the shoot was scheduled around his ability to make the five-hour trip south in mid-November.

Dave had briefed each of the actors on their roles, giving them his thoughts on wardrobe. He pretty much went with what they turned up with on the day.

Once again the producers' theatre connections paid off in securing a hair and makeup artist for the production.

It was a fairly relaxed shoot, starting at 10am and finishing at 4pm. Cameraman Roger Richardson went with the natural light available at the cafe location, shooting on a Canon 5D Mk II. With no lighting required and sound recording limited to ambient audio of a busy cafe and a few lines of dialogue, sound and lighting team member Alex Fuller had an easy day. The homebuilt crane and dolly made by team member Laurie Neville, who also camera assisted, worked a treat. Roger's partner Anna had the role of continuity, allowing Dave to concentrate on directing the actors. There were no hiccups across the shoot. Dave attributes the success to the enthusiasm of a group of friends getting together to do something they all love doing.

There was no budget to speak of for ‘Cappuccino Tango’. Everything was borrowed or made, and cast and crew gave their time for free. The cafe they were shooting in sponsored the coffee, but everyone had to take care of their own lunch.

## THE POST

Dave did a first edit on his Final Cut Pro X system, starting the night of the shoot. It took him five nights, beginning each session after getting home from work. He put the first cut out to his team members for feedback and then did another pass, taking into account their notes. Andy supplied him with a final mix of the song. Dave then added sound effects and background audio and did a final audio mix in his own studio using Logic Pro, before laying it back to the locked off picture. ‘Cappuccino Tango’ was delivered a week prior to the delivery deadline.

## THE AFTERLIFE

‘Cappuccino Tango’ deservedly has the highest number of views at 20,080 on Tropfest NZ’s YouTube channel at the time of writing. Dave has not actively pursued a festival strategy for the film so far. He has left it to Tropfest International to find distribution, which they have secured in Australia and Japan. In 2014, Dave plans to be more proactive in getting his film into other festivals worldwide.

## THE CAREER

Dave works as a project manager in the Oil & Gas industry and sees himself as a weekend filmmaker. His prizewinning trip to L.A. however has opened his and wife Nicci’s eyes to the professional world of filmmaking as Hollywood does it.

Dave and Nicci, who paid to be there, spent four days in workshops at the Latin American Training Centre, courtesy of the Motion Picture Association and NZ Screen Association, who sponsored the first prize. There were 30 other filmmakers participating from 10 different countries. Sessions ranged from entertainment law and how to pitch in Hollywood to meeting with 60 members of the Writers Guild of America and a representative from Creative Artists Agency, a top talent agency in Hollywood. One of the highlights for Dave was listening to a presentation by US film and TV producer Dan Jinks describing the rejections and struggles he encountered in getting his academy award winning film American Beauty

made. Another was hearing Alan Poul speak, whose executive producing credits include two of Dave’s favourite shows, Aaron Sorkin’s ‘The Newsroom’, and ‘Six Feet Under’.

Part of the immersion programme took Dave to AFM, the film industry’s largest US event. There he saw the business of filmmaking in action as filmmakers pitched their ideas and films in the hope of securing finance and distribution.

While not determinedly bent on a career as a filmmaker, Dave is still following his passion. He is already in post production for a short for Tropfest 2014. And he does have feature film ideas that he would like to realise. The biggest consideration for him as a filmmaker right now is how he and his team move from where they are to the next level and hopefully beyond, possibly to the world of Hollywood he now knows a lot more about.

## THOUGHTS TO SHARE

As an experienced short filmmaker, Dave has picked up a number of lessons that he applied in the making of his Tropfest winner. Of the three ideas that were floating around as they considered what to do for Tropfest, ‘Cappuccino Tango’ stood out. For Dave, finding a good story is key. As is working with good people; in Dave’s case, a team that has made films together many times before. Enthusiasm, learning from mistakes and that all important item - great coffee - were some of the other ingredients that Dave felt made this particular short a success.

For Dave, the prize winning trip to L.A. revealed some significant insights into the business of film and the people who make the industry there tick. At AFM, he experienced firsthand that a filmmaker without a feature script or finished film to pitch is merely an observer. More crucially, though, AFM rammed home the difficulty for filmmakers of securing distribution so that your film can get in front of audiences - it’s one thing to make a film, it’s something else completely to get it seen.

The willingness of the industry people he met to share knowledge, contacts, ideas and experiences came as a surprise to Dave, who was expecting them to be much more guarded. But there was one thing above all that stood out in his encounters with every industry person he met: they are in it because they all love film. Just like him.



*Our success was due to the enthusiasm of a group of friends getting together to do something they all love doing*

Dave Smith





*With people who share the same vision for the project, you will have a lot of fun even through the trying times*

Tess Novak



## FIRST-TIME FILMMAKER TESS NOVAK AND HER SHORT 'A KIWI LEGEND'

Tess Novak's short film *'A Kiwi Legend'* took the audience award at the 2013 Tropfest NZ Short Film Festival. The Tropfest Signature Item (TSI) for that year - an item that must be included in some way, shape or form - was gumboot. Tess jumped in gumboots and all on the TSI, with it becoming the storyline and central symbol for her short. A host of personalities including Sir Colin Meads and Denise L'Estrange-Corbet wore them, threw them and waxed lyrical about them.

Essentially a mockumentary driven predominantly by talking heads, *'A Kiwi Legend'* was popular with young and old alike, as iconic kiwis parodied a New Zealand icon.

### THE SCRIPT

Tess was doing a double degree focusing on Film, Theatre, and Marketing & Information Systems at Victoria University and was keen to engage in an extra curricular project. On a trip home to Taranaki in January 2012, she went along to Tropfest's stunning venue at the outdoor TSB Bowl of Brooklands to watch the 16 latest Australian finalists that were shown to launch Tropfest in New Zealand. Script ideas started churning in her head when she heard the TSI was gumboot. An outline for the script was written in the car on the way back to Wellington. Soon after, Tess spent a day coming up with a rough first draft. The script evolved slowly over the next few months. It went through several drafts leading up to the shoot, with readers including her lecturers and the General Manager at Peter Jackson's Wingnut Films.

### THE TEAM

Tess enlisted the assistance of Keith Finnerty of New Plymouth's Cat and Mouse Productions to shoot and edit the film. Keith recommended Dave Carnachan of local post house King Street Creative to do the audio post. Tess got her school friend Millie Lynskey to come on as co-producer. Later, thanks to an introduction from another of her lecturers, Tess was able to secure Wellington composer Tom McLeod to do the score. Tess had brought together a well rounded team that developed a real camaraderie and had a lot of laughs and fun across the duration of the project.

### THE TALENT

Keith had told Tess when she pitched him the idea that he would only do it if she approached professional talent to fill the roles. Tess had written stereotypes for the characters, so she went about matching personalities to them. Cold calls, friends of friends of friends, her co-producer Millie, actors agents; she tried them all. A cold email through the WORLD website led to her securing her first cast attachment, The Fashion Designer: Denise L'Estrange-Corbet. With a known personality on board a domino effect ensued, making it easier to get others in. Availability was a real issue dealing with personalities who have busy schedules. Some dropped off. After five months of constant pursuit, she had secured all but one of the final cast who would eventually appear in the film—The Farmer: Sir Colin Meads, The Comedians: Dai Henwood and Steve Wrigley, The Rugby Players: All Black Beauden Barrett and his brother Kane, The Super Athlete: Valerie Adams, and The Actor: Melanie Lynskey. Rehearsals were limited to a few run-throughs on the day before the camera rolled.

### THE SPONSORSHIP

Tess needed sponsorship to help cover the significant costs involved. Although she only paid her cast koha (donation), money was needed for props, travel back and forth to Auckland, the shoot and post. She insisted on paying fees to Keith and Dave as they were making the major contributions with time, and production and post production equipment. Tess also had to pay for an LA-based DOP to shoot Melanie Lynskey. Her and Millie's marketing skills came in real handy, helping to lock in a couple of major sponsors and a number of others that covered almost all the hard costs in the budget, with the difference being made up from Tess's own pocket.

### THE SHOOT

The six day shoot for *'A Kiwi Legend'* kicked off in August and finished in October with sporadic days to match cast availability. Not everything went smoothly, with one actor having to be replaced because of a no-show. This required a rewrite of part of the script. The most difficult element of





*It's one thing to make a film, it's something else completely to get it seen.*

the shoot for Tess was getting Melanie Lynskey shot in LA. Being a first timer and not having any LA connections, Tess trawled through a huge number of film crew directories and consequently people's individual sites to find a DOP that had a similar shooting style to Keith's. Thinking that she should do things by the book, Tess sought a shooting permit to film outdoors. That's where the problems really started. Permit bodies in LA differ depending on the location. The permit fee Tess was looking at was US\$2000. To avoid having to pay the fee, Tess decided to shoot in a hotel room. But no, permits are needed even to shoot in a hotel or someone's house in LA. Then Tess learned about an exemption for crews of three or less who work with minimal equipment and cause little impact. She then spent hours talking to Film LA and the City of Los Angeles seeking the exemption. It finally came through. The hotel room was booked for two hours and Tess directed the shoot on the day via SKYPE from her Wellington student flat.

### THE POST

Picture post production started straight after the shoot, with Tess and Keith working on a rough cut. The first edit highlighted the need for a couple of minor pickups, but allowed Tom the composer to get going. The editing, grading and audio post were completed across a month, working around her university schedule, and Keith's and Dave's workloads. Tess hand-delivered her film to the New Plymouth office of the Taranaki Festival of the Arts Trust who runs Tropfest three days prior to the deadline.

### THE AFTERLIFE


Tess hasn't actively pursued getting 'A Kiwi Legend' out to other festivals, although it has screened at the New Zealand Short Film Festival in Sydney and Brisbane. Tropfest NZ arranged for all the 2013 Tropfest NZ finalist films to screen on New Zealand's Rialto Channel on SKY. A number of the 2013 NZ shorts were packaged together with a selection of Australian shorts by Tropfest International and screened on Australian channel SBS.

### THE CAREER

With 'A Kiwi Legend' under her belt, Tess leveraged off her film to get a two week internship with Australian producer Helen Bowden at Matchbox Pictures in Sydney. An opportunity then arose for Tess to work on Helen's mini-series 'Devil's Playground', starring Toni Collette. She applied for and received a New Zealand Film Commission Trainee Producer Internship Scheme, which cemented the job for her. Once the

three-month internship was over, Tess was able to continue on the production as Producer's Assistant. Thanks to a colleague on the 'Devil's Playground', she will move into a job as Post Production Runner on the next *Mad Max* feature. That will give her a few months more work, which will take her into the new year. Tess is pursuing opportunities to move onto once she's finished on 'Mad Max'. For the foreseeable future, she's happy to make Sydney her home while she focuses on building her skills, confidence and production resume.

### THOUGHTS TO SHARE

For Tess, Tropfest was a fantastic opportunity to make a film and get it seen. As her first short, 'A Kiwi Legend' was a massive learning experience for her that made it all worthwhile. She feels that as long as you are confident and working with people who share the same vision for the project, you will have a lot of fun even through the trying times. Tess is a Tropfest convert who encourages anyone interested in filmmaking to have a go. Why don't you? 

## ABOUT TROPFEST:

Tropfest NZ Short Film Festival screens in New Plymouth's outdoor venue the TSB Bowl of Brooklands on Sunday 16 February 2014.

Deadline for films submissions is Monday 6 January 2014.

The Tropfest Signature Item for 2014 is GLASSES, which is open to interpretation. Any glasses accepted.

Details available on the Tropfest website at [www.tropfest.co.nz](http://www.tropfest.co.nz).

Follow Tropfest NZ on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Tropfestnz](http://www.facebook.com/Tropfestnz)



*Tina*, a web series in crowdfunding stages, is about a Herpetologist Tuatara expert with serious delusions involving his “Love Doll” girlfriend. The other characters – a reptile handler from Queensland, a failed social worker from New York and a mutinous mother from Pitcairn, hinder more than help his recovery. The eight-episode series will be shot in documentary style.

**Viewfinder talked to Writer/Producer Josh Borthwick about Tina.**

**YOU'RE WRITER/ PRODUCER; AND USH DE LA CROIX IS CREATOR/DIRECTOR – BOTH FROM WOLF PRODUCTIONS, SPECIALISING IN WEB VIDEO CREATION**

We started Wolf in April 2013, so it's early days for us. Ush has worked in the Film industry for a long time and I've been involved in web media and advertising for an equally long-time and we think there are some unique ingredients to mix in the pot. We were both involved in video streaming and production for the web back in 2000 with TVNZ's web portal - NZOOM and we played around with doing our own thing before the birth of our son, but it was far too early to talk about video streaming and web video creation with the state of internet connections back then. The time feels ripe now. We're passionate about making this work. New Zealand's film and TV industry needs some new ideas and approaches if we're going to keep all the really talented people in this country gainfully employed over the next few years. Having the Avatar films confirmed for production here is awesome, but I think we need a lot more than that to grow and develop a sustainable local industry through the next 10 to 20 years.

**WHERE ARE YOU UP TO NOW WITH THE SERIES?**

We're basically ready to go. We've got a small crew consisting of DOP - Steve Allanson, 1st AC - Garth Michael, Sound Recordist - Deb Frame, Make-up & Hair - Linda Charlton and Art Direction - Billie Charlton. Many of our

actors are cast from StarNow, which was a super easy process by the way, and most of our locations are signed-off - Auckland Zoo, core character's house and we're waiting on confirmation from Auckland Airport and a cafe. We've got all eight-episodes scripted and we're storyboarding the pilot as we speak.

**WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR TINA?**

Ush and I were joking with a friend that we should take a blow-up doll into a cafe and interact with it while some mates surreptitiously film the reactions on iPhones. Ush went away that day and outlined a whole story idea for it! I started writing scripts, but found it hard to make them consistently funny, so we enlisted help from a couple of guys we knew from my last job and a chance introduction. The four of us would brainstorm ideas and then go away and take a number of episodes each to write, then we'd get back together and critique each other's work and develop the ideas and comedy further. The process is way more fruitful as a team of writers in this situation than plugging away by myself for me personally.

The other writers are Andrew Thompson; a super funny ex agency guy that I've worked with a bit in my last ad sales business and Simon Eskow; a classically trained writer who's breaking into comedy. A mutual friend introduced Simon and I and between the three of us we found a really nice collaborative writing style.

**WHY DID YOU DECIDE ON A WEB SERIES FORMAT?**

We felt that a web series would be easy entry from a production cost perspective and we could get our story out to a much wider audience. My thinking's changed a lot on that ►



as we've gotten into the process. I think we're much more likely to get a small, loyal audience for this type of show than a massive following. The interesting part will be how we can develop a decent financial ecosystem off a smaller audience - say 20 - 50 thousand rather than hundreds of thousands of viewers.

### WHY DID YOU CHOOSE KICKSTARTER AS YOUR CROWDFUNDING PLATFORM?

We chose Kickstarter thinking we could capitalise on their bigger audience and we assumed (wrongly) that they'd do a big PR push with their launch into New Zealand - they didn't.

### ANY LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR FROM THE CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN?

We've learned a heap through the process. I did a huge amount of research before we launched and I was convinced we could rely on 80 friends and family to tip in \$100 each to reach the 30 percent threshold that's often talked about as an essential, guaranteed, pledge level to reach early on in the campaign process. We reached about half of that with the average pledge being \$50. We were still blown away by this and felt really humbled by the level of support we got from people - many of whom we hadn't even counted on. The average pledge for most platforms is around \$25, so we were stoked to reach the levels we did, but of course it wasn't enough to be successful. We realised that we needed to have built a much bigger fan-base outside of our immediate social networks in order for the campaign to reach the levels we wanted. We decided to shut the campaign down early, knowing that it wasn't going to reach its all or nothing threshold of \$25,000, and convert the \$4,000 our backers had pledged to a new project for a pilot. We've learnt to be much more conservative with our pledge levels, so we reduced the new project down to \$3,000 to allow for any drop-offs. We debated whether or not to launch so close to Christmas, given Kiwis essentially shut-down over Dec / Jan, but felt this is the best time to keep the momentum going and ensure our cast and crew will be available to make the pilot. We're currently 53 percent funded with 14-days to go, so it may still be touch and go as to whether or not we reach our new goal!

### WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR FUNDING THE REST OF THE SERIES?

We hope to build enough of a following from the pilot to crowdfund part of the whole series and we think a pilot will

*Many successful  
crowdfunders have  
started marketing their  
project months  
or as much as a  
year in advance*

also give us a tangible product to discuss with potential sponsors. We're also keeping our options open for the various funding initiatives through next year such as NZ On Air's digital fund.

### WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE LIMITED FUNDING POSE?

Funding's hard all right. Traditional funding bodies are conservative and prefer to go with known producers and crowdfunding will probably only cover 10 to 15 percent of costs, so we have to be very flexible in both how we've scripted the show and how we schedule cast and crew. We're very conscious not to rely on freebies from the industry and we want to create a sustainable production model for our projects. In truth we're still forging new territory here, but it's not dissimilar to my experience with early internet ventures, so we're confident we'll find a way.

### CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT CASTING?

Ush ultimately decides who's going to fit and I'll give her options. Both writers can actually act (I'm not included in that!) and when we were going through read-throughs as a part of the scripting process they were brilliant! So Andrew actually walked away with the lead and Simon's playing Simon - a failed social-worker from New York. We found the rest of our cast on StarNow and ran a casting day where we were lucky enough to find talented people we could work with over a number of sessions throughout the day. We ran it at the Grey Lynn community centre, which is a great cost effective venue by the way.

### AND WHERE ARE YOUR LOCATIONS?

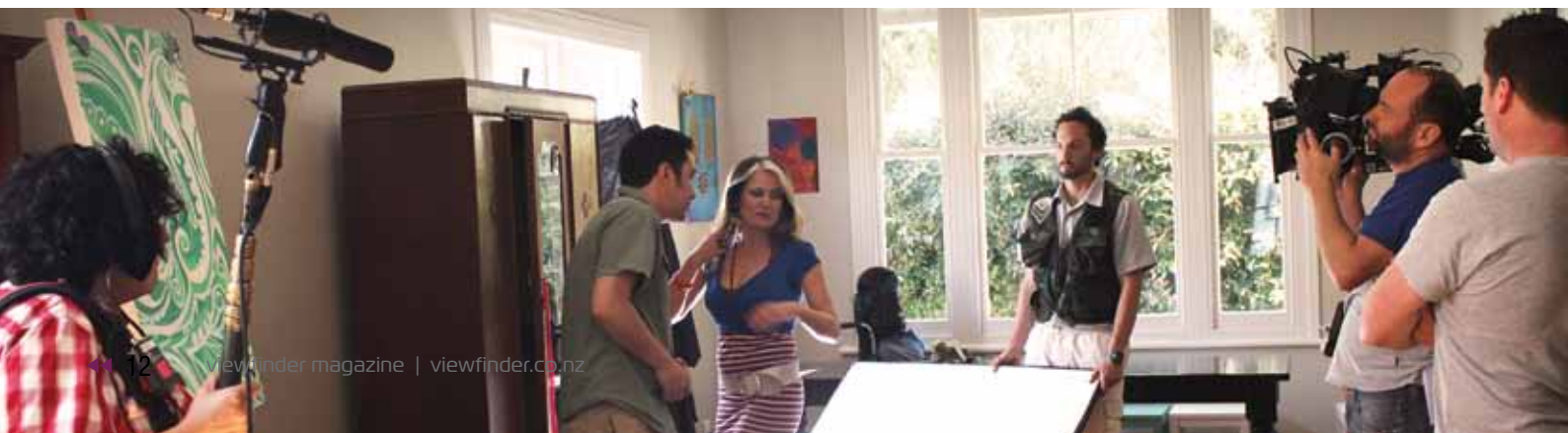
All around Grey Lynn (with the exception of a couple of airport scenes), this is partly due to budget constraints and partly because it's a cool place to shoot - everyone's very familiar with the process around here. We scripted it with Grey Lynn in mind.

### ONCE YOU HAVE FUNDING FOR THE PILOT, WHAT WILL BE YOUR TIMELINES?

We're aiming for shooting over three days commencing 14 January and we'll be shooting weekdays. We're allowing a month for editing with a scheduled release (to backers first) in March 2014.

### WHAT EQUIPMENT WILL YOU BE USING?

We're shooting on a Blackmagic - single camera and no





lights. That can make it challenging in dark Grey Lynn Villas - but the crew's getting pretty good at managing it and it keeps numbers and setup times down.

We're hoping Jeremy Masters will edit, depending on his schedule and I think he uses Premiere. Failing that - Ush is really good at editing on Premiere and does a lot of our commercial work, but it is better to have some separation between direction and editing.

### AND WHAT ABOUT MUSIC?

We're lucky enough to have a local artist, Katie Scott, produce the score and she's come up with some original tracks for the series. You can hear one of them about 30 seconds into our pitch video on Kickstarter.

### HOW WILL YOU PROMOTE TINA?

Social media mainly and some paid online advertising (depending on sponsors etc). We're planning on looking for a Social Media producer in the New Year. It's almost a full-time, but very necessary, job and I think we can do it a lot better with dedicated resource.

### WHAT IS YOUR FUTURE VISION FOR TINA?

We're very keen to enter into web series festivals, although we're not really producing around their releases or anything. We'd love to do another series around our character Pete in the Gold Coast. We also have another couple of web series ideas under development if we can get the mechanics working well with *Tina* - one's about teachers and the other's about endangered animals (people in animal suits that is) converging on New Zealand and an Ark.

### DO YOU SEE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAKING INCOME FROM THE SERIES ONCE IT'S RELEASED?

We're planning on selling the series on Vimeo as a director's cut and we hope to get a bit of income from advertising on YouTube and extras available for sale on the site - T-shirts and experiences like the ones we have on our Kickstarter project at the moment.

### DID YOU RESEARCH WEB SERIES?

A little - we started a Facebook page called "bestoftheweb" because we realised that it still needs promoting here as a platform. There are some really good shows out there that people don't know about. And that's the challenge really. YouTube is great for singing cats and poll-dancing fails, but it's a lot more challenging to get long-form content with

*A lot of people still see  
American accents  
(and possibly British)  
as a stamp of quality  
and interest*

production value noticed on that platform.


### WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS TO MAKING A DOCUMENTARY?

An equal mix of drama and comedy is really important. We think the mastery is in taking people from fits of laughter to almost shedding a tear for the characters. There's a certain amount of authenticity or earnestness that needs to be present in characters and plot development to really make a documentary sing. *Angry Boys* and *Derek* (the latest from the creators of *The Office*) are the two examples we like best and aspire to.

### CAN YOU OFFER ANY TIPS FOR WEB SERIES CREATORS?

Get out and make them and above all else be flexible, but value and look after your cast and crew - be as professional as you would be in producing and scheduling a film or TV project. Write and direct with the genre in mind - make the first five - 30 seconds in each episode really compelling. The web isn't a push medium. Your audience won't give you the chances you get on TV to develop a story and build momentum. You have to make things fast and snappy. Of course I say all of this having not actually produced a web series yet! Those are just my humble observations. If you're going to use crowdfunding, don't overestimate the percentage contribution it'll give to your production and don't expect the platform to drive backers. Many successful crowdfunders have started marketing their project months or as much as a year in advance. It's not an easy solution and it's a full-time job raising and keeping backers, so expect to do the heavy lifting yourself.

### AND THE FUTURE FOR WEB SERIES?

I think the biggest challenge, or barrier to entry if you will, is funding. We're still trying to crack how you make money with these things. In the States they can be bought by existing TV networks for off-air syndication - so there is a model there, but the ecosystem in New Zealand isn't here yet. I'd like to think we can make content that transcends geographical borders, but that's yet to be tested, a lot of people still see American accents (and possibly British) as a stamp of quality and interest. We've written *Tina* with key characters from other countries to give it a broader feel, but we won't know how that works until she's made. 



[www.tinatheseries.com](http://www.tinatheseries.com)



[www.facebook.com/tinatheseries](https://www.facebook.com/tinatheseries)

Fund this project at: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1880656748/tina-the-series-pilot>



(micro budget)

EVERYTHING WE  
LOVED



ROMEO AND  
JULIET - A LOVE  
SONG

# INDIE FILMMAKING ON A MICRO BUDGET



FANTAIL



THE DEADLY  
PONIES GANG

At the Big Screen Symposium earlier this year a popular, inspiring and surprisingly contentious session was 'Cinematic Vision on a Shoestring'. The panel included Zoe McIntosh, Tim van Dammen, Curtis Vowell and Tom Hern and was facilitated by Australian director, producer and writer Rolf de Heer.



TOM HERN

Producer of feature film *Everything we Loved*  
Funded by: Private Investment of \$150k



ZOE MCINTOSH

Writer/ Director/ Producer  
*The Deadly Ponies Gang*  
Self funded

## FUNDING

We started by shooting a teaser using actors who were keen to work. We didn't go to the Film Commission or TV networks up front, we just set about making it.

Most of our investors were friends, friends of family - we ended up with 20 different investors for that \$150k, so they weren't investing big portions of money. The teaser went a long way to convince them to invest, and we did all sorts of creative stuff; offering producing credits, huge financial incentives at the back end and so on.

## LESSONS LEARNT

Microbudget is a licence to be bold. I think with other films we weren't necessarily bold enough. We fell into this no man's land of making quite a broad picture but not being able to compete with the big broad pictures that had the big names cast in huge budgets. But then at the other end of the scale, we weren't quite risqué or bold enough to make the picture that we really wanted to make.

The micro budget films I want to make are the ones that take risks, that are actually bold and brave. The irony is that that boldness is more likely to connect you with an audience in such a saturated marketplace. What is going to cut through is something fresh, something bold, something original and brave.

I think with micro budgets, two of the most important things are - and it sounds really obvious but some people still don't catch onto it - the strength of the script and the strength of the performances.

## INDIE FILMMAKING INSPIRATION

I was in Berlin and I watched this fantastic Turkish filmmaker. He had really wanted to make films but just couldn't get the money so he started making films with his friends and family and filming it himself.

Use the things around you - tell the story about the world you know and I think it's fascinating using friends and family because immediately you're very comfortable. With *The Deadly Ponies Gang*, I used to be one of those annoying horsey pony-club geeks back in the day, so I knew the pony club world quite well but I also have a deep love for hip hop and ghastly gangster culture too. I was immediately drawn to this.

I think first and foremost there was real heart and an interesting story behind the silliness. This one guy has no teeth - but it's really a story about friendship and the length one guy will go to help his mate to get some teeth. I thought this was a really unique story I haven't seen in a cinema before. The beauty about it was these two guys who throughout the whole film have this gorgeous connection which I thought was lovely.

## FUNDING

I couldn't be bothered waiting around for funding, it just bores me personally. So I just started making it. I produced it - I'm not a good producer, but I just had to do it. We just used what was around us.

## INSPIRATION

Because I make documentaries, a lot of people tend to tell me when they come across someone who's bit of a



character. Someone had mentioned the Rhymestone Cowboy, a gangster rapper in Christchurch who is notoriously known for rapping about pig hunting and pony club babes.

It's all so deliciously surreal and ridiculous to be true, but it was true.

So I was just collecting all these odd little elements and weaving them into this film which I never actually thought would make sense, but it has made sense.

Because we had no funding, we had no one telling us what to do, we could be super playful.

The crew was highly skeleton, so everyone, right down to the art department, was throwing in ideas of what could be fantastic. It was such an enjoyable process.

I highly recommend that.

## LESSONS LEARNT

Get a soundie if you've got any money. My biggest regret is trying to do sound and direct. It was just a nightmare doing sound.

The other thing I would recommend, which has been really fun, think of creating a world outside of your film.

In the film there's this gig called 'Help My Mate Dwayne Get Some Teeth Gig', which really happened. We did this promo telling people to come along to the gig, and that went nuts. We had 4,000 views in two days, so there's already bit of an audience for the film and now we're milking it a bit.

We've got merchandise; t-shirts, magnets, calendars with them doing sexy poses. It's kinda cool, because you can make some cash. Hopefully it's going to be enough to fly me to the festival or something.

I think bottom line, it's not about money, it's about having fun - if you're excited about making films, get your dad involved, film him, he might have a story.

As people we've got this gorgeous network of interesting stories and fascinating characters around us. And that's pretty exciting.

 [www.facebook.com/TheDeadlyPoniesGang](https://www.facebook.com/TheDeadlyPoniesGang)



## CURTIS VOWELL

Director *Fantail*

Funded by NZFC's low budget Escalator scheme / & partnered with co-producer  
Funding of \$250k

## TOP TEN LESSONS LEARNT

1. Material that suits the budget. Write to budget. And that's regardless if you want to make a six million dollar film or a \$100k film, or in our case, a \$250k film, it's probably the one key thing that will undo you later on.

2. A strong story doesn't cost anything. It takes time but it's the one thing you've got to get right before you start shooting because low budget is so quick, we had a 20 day shoot and it was all over before we knew it.

3. Great performances can carry a film. That was one thing I felt I had total confidence over and that I believed I knew the difference between a good and a bad performance. I didn't have a huge wealth of onscreen directing experience, even though I'd spent a long time on set, but I just knew that I could get good performances so when people say, the performances were really good in *Fantail* I pat myself on the back.

4. Limited locations and choose them carefully. If you're going to have a few locations then make sure they're really good ones and that will really help.

5. Keep your cast small. It helps in rehearsals beforehand, you're not trying to juggle a whole lot, you can just keep it really contained and achievable.

6. Have a co-production team. I didn't realise just how useful it would be. Not only to have that support, but to have a physical building that can be the central point to bring the crew together and it adds the professional touch as opposed to pulling people into your living room. Which is fine too, but it just made things that little bit easier for us.

7. The will to finish it. You've got to have a team who actually have that desire. It's your baby, two years later you're working on something that you haven't paid yourself a cent for and if you're hating it then it's just going to be an awful process. You need to love it. Enjoy what you're doing. Having

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*In low budget/micro budget filmmaking the most important thing is to give yourself much more time than normal because you'll need it.*

*- Rolf de Heer.*

the will to finish it, and that's not just one person, but everyone involved.

8. An editor who cares. I was just really lucky to have an editor who cares. Because they're going to be on board for months after with you. If you can edit yourself that's fantastic, but if you can't, it's going to be you and him or her, stuck in a room and they become another huge creative clog in the machine.

9. Beg, borrow and steal. Be brave to ask, you don't get anything if you don't ask. That is something that personally I find quite hard to do, but if you do it, you'd be surprised at how many people offer you stuff for nothing or for free. We got to shoot at Rainbow's End for free. People were telling us you won't be able to get in there, it's like \$5000 a day - but we asked and we managed to get a meeting and the meeting went well and they said yeah we'll support your project.

10. Feed your crew well. You're not going to be able to pay them much, so if you do anything, then feed them well.

 [www.facebook.com/fantailmovie](http://www.facebook.com/fantailmovie)



TIM VAN DAMMEN

Director / Co-Writer / Co-Producer *Romeo and Juliet - A Love Song*

Funded: Privately / Film Commission

## BUDGET FILMMAKING

In my opinion if you spend the time building up a great crew, and you've spent the time working on something that you really think is great, do whatever you want to do. And do that thing and don't even think about how much money you've got for it, because that's where all the interesting decisions happen.

We had a huge cast. We had a heap of locations. The time in my opinion is best invested in building a team and making sure that you're all on the same page that you all understand the best way to use the limited resources.

I do think a lot of the exciting parts of what we did came

out of not having any money. How the hell are we going to do this? We'll just cello tape the camera to the end of this broom. It's not like we can't do the shots because we don't have the money.

We had three campervans and we managed to film every scene with campervans at different angles. We covered them in coffee to make them look rusty and all.


Do whatever you want to do and make it work for you on that sort of budget. The only way you're going to learn is to do it. Just grab what you've got, write a script, something really ambitious and go and do it and you'll learn way more by doing that than you will by doing anything else.

In terms of this film, I really liked the idea of setting a musical in a Romanian gypsy world of a rubbish dump. I thought okay I would love to have these really beautiful people but everything else is just disgusting, which worked in my favour for our art component - we'd go to the inorganic collection and it's all free. I wanted every frame of every shot of the film to be absolutely jam packed. I'm aware that we are working in pictures, and that is the difference between working in theatre and music - that we are working in pictures. If you're not working in pictures put it on the stage. If it's dialogue driven, just do a radio show. Be aware that what you are doing is creating compelling images. And these images need to draw the whole, which is my favourite part of directing.

## THE TEAM

I can't stress enough, you're not going to make a film by yourself. You need a team. You really need to build those relationships. People have way better ideas than you, that's why they do what they do.

## AND FINALLY

You've got to be prepared to suck. And you've gotta be prepared to suck for a long time. I really want to stress to anyone that wants to do this sort of thing is not to limit yourself. This whole micro budget thing should be liberating, not limiting. 

 [www.facebook.com/RomeoandJulietALoveSong](http://www.facebook.com/RomeoandJulietALoveSong)

 [www.bigscreensymposium.com](http://www.bigscreensymposium.com)

*If you get the script right, and you cast it well, you can practically shoot it out of focus and it will work. But if you get the casting wrong or if there's one bad performance you don't have a film.*

*- Rolf de Heer*



# THE CHANGING FACE OF DISTRIBUTION

IndieReign is a New Zealand start-up designed to help filmmakers distribute and sell their films direct to fans.

IndieReign launched in January this year and has 14 staff based in its headquarters in Hamilton, four staff in India, and an office in San Francisco.

**Viewfinder talked to David White, Founder and CEO of IndieReign.**

## THE INSPIRATION FOR INDIEREIGN

We were seeing real pain with over 50,000 independent films made every year, but only one percent gaining a distribution deal, for the other 99 percent, nothing. After all that effort, raising money, making the film, trying to get distribution deals, most filmmakers become burnt out and will never see any gain from all of that work. We wanted to change this old, dysfunctional model, and start a new film revolution where independent filmmakers could take distribution in their own hands, and sell anywhere around the world using an online platform. This goal motivated us to create IndieReign.

## THE CHANGING FACE OF DISTRIBUTION

IndieReign is transactional based, so people pay for only what they're watching, which benefits the filmmaker a lot more than subscription based models. In saying that, we don't tell filmmakers to steer clear of that at all. Filmmakers should be treating their digital distribution strategy as importantly as their script. You need to be building your audience from script stage, marketing yourself and your film, and doing a lot of research on the platforms that are out there. Get the maximum reach by putting your film on as many platforms as possible, but start out with transactional based platforms before subscription. Subscription based platforms function because there is a huge back catalogue, your film would have to be streamed hundreds of times to see a small return, whereas if your film is viewed half as much on a transactional model you'll see more profit.

We have always been of the belief that to create a sustainable independent film industry the model needs to be transactional based. The current backlash from the music industry about how little they earn from streaming services like Spotify will extend out to all different types of media. Unless you are a big blockbuster on Netflix you are going to really struggle to make any decent money from streaming services. Our main priority is to help the filmmaker, we made

a conscious decision that we don't make money unless the filmmaker makes money.

So again, I would stress the most important thing here is to treat your VOD release strategy as importantly as your script. Do your research, plan your windowing, know the platforms in-depth and figure out how you get your film seen, clicked and purchased.

## INDIEREIGN'S CATALOGUE

IndieReign accepts all kinds of independently made films, excluding music videos and x-rated adult entertainment videos. We do not want to dictate to our viewers what we think is "good" content, IndieReign is the home of independent cinema, and film fans can find all kinds of indie films on site from micro-budget horrors to highly polished award-winning dramas.

Currently we're finding the most popular films on the site are feature length horrors and thrillers. Comedy shorts also get some heavy sales, but these trends are constantly changing.

## TIPS FOR FILMMAKERS

For filmmakers, selling online is a pretty different ball game. Your poster and film stills are highly important, these assets act as your shop front, and they have to be looking great to tempt people into your store. Your trailer is then the sales person who gets people to get their wallets out, if it's good, you're half way there. Once you've got those bases covered the next step is promotion, you have to share the film over your social channels, get your friends and family to do the same, and get people to review your film. That's a must! Get as many people as possible involved, see if your cast and crew can also help spread the word, we find that works well.

## USE YOUR NETWORK

You don't necessarily need to have a large network, you just need a portion of your network to be active and supportive with your film online. In the most successful examples on IndieReign, the filmmakers had a decent network which they'd built up over the lifespan of their project. More importantly,



they themselves, and their cast and crew actively promoted the film months before it was released, building up a community already keen to see the film.

## TIMING FOR ONLINE DISTRIBUTION

Straight after the festival circuit is a great time for online distribution, we recommend having your film up and ready to go on IndieReign prior to festivals, then as soon as that's finished you can log on to your account and make your film live with one click, that way at festivals you can promote its sale and start building up that buyer-base.

Also if you are lucky enough to have a theatrical release, coordinating your VOD release as soon as that's finished is great, some people prefer to do this before a DVD release, or at the same time. Just one word of advice, don't wait over a year chasing festivals or theatrical releases. If you have a film ready to go, and no one's biting, get it up online, you can only fight to keep your audience interested for so long, it's better to use your energy promoting it online than chasing people who aren't prepared to help or buy in this market.

## INDIEGOGO PARTNERSHIP


We were excited to recently announce the news of our partnership with Indiegogo, the world's largest global crowdfunding platform. This partnership is the first step towards making the transition for production or raising funds for independent filmmakers to getting their film live and selling to their audience on IndieReign. Fund it on Indiegogo, watch it on IndieReign. There are no obligations on the filmmaker's side, of course, but we want to encourage this.

## BENEFITS OF USING INDIEREIGN

Many VOD platforms exist out there, we just don't spend a lot of time dwelling on that. There's a space for this market, and everyone wants a piece of it. We're just working hard to make sure we're always in the lead, we're always bettering IndieReign, and bringing out the best stuff for our site. We are very much a marketplace where filmmakers are selling directly to their fans. The big focus for us and moving into the New Year is how we help a film with no marketing budget find an audience outside of their initial network. We have a lot of exciting things planned here and feel that marketing support will really differentiate us along with ensuring films do not just get lost in a backlog of content.

Filmmakers get a lot out of IndieReign, sign up is free, you can embed the player anywhere, we provide constant technical support, and host a whole array of sales tips on our blog. Filmmakers keep 70 percent of each sale, while film lovers get an awesome viewing experience, they're buying films at a lower cost, a higher percentage of every sale goes to the filmmaker, and every day we're getting great new films on the site.

## GETTING STARTED WITH INDIEREIGN

All you need to do is go to [www.indiereign.com](http://www.indiereign.com) and sign up to get started. If you're wanting to sell your film, then we do need your trailer, film poster, film still, and of course the film, as well as your synopsis. Films that also include a list of Cast and Crew are more successful sellers as well, so do encourage them to join and help promote it. 

 [www.indiereign.com](http://www.indiereign.com)

 [www.facebook.com/filmmakers](https://www.facebook.com/filmmakers)



*Treat your VOD release strategy as importantly as your script. You need to be building your audience from script stage, marketing yourself and your film, and doing a lot of research on the platforms that are out there.*



# OLDER THE MOVIE

Older is a feature film currently in post-production created on a low budget sourced from an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign.

*Older* is a drama/comedy about sex, love, relationships, growing up and how our attachment to the past can colour our perception of the present, sometimes for the worse.

*Older* is about Alex a 29 year old man-child who's recently moved back in with his parents and is determined not to grow up. At his best friend's wedding he runs into an old high school friend. A romance blossoms, but he's still infatuated with another girl he fell in love with ten years earlier.

The *Older* team have just wrapped on principal photography - completing the bulk of the filming over three weeks - with the shooting of some additional pick-ups in December.

**Viewfinder talks to Producer Kimberly Martel.**

## HOW LONG HAS THE FILM BEEN IN THE MAKING?

The idea for the script is something that Guy has been playing around with and working on for the past year or two but has just recently started to take on its true form. In late August of this year, Guy put together a skeleton cast and crew to shoot a handful of scenes from the script over a few weekends, from which a teaser trailer was made. We believe this proof of concept contributed heavily to the success of our crowdfunding campaign. Pre-production for the feature film started immediately upon completion of shooting the trailer



*I want Older to represent a greater movement for our industry and how we can empower ourselves and each other to make films without anyone's permission or approval.*

and principal on that wrapped up in November.

After some well-deserved time off over the holidays, we anticipate post-production kicking off in earnest in the early new year.

### IS THE FILM BEING MADE OUT OF WORK HOURS?

Our production team is made up of three members, Guy Pigden (who is also writer/director/lead actor), Harley Neville (who also plays one of the main characters named Henry) and myself. All three of us have our regular jobs! I've been working full time for the duration of filming while both Harley and Guy utilised paid leave time to allow themselves full attention to making the film.

### WHO'S INVOLVED WITH THE FILM?

Our principal cast are as follows:

- Guy Pigden (Auckland Actors) as Alex
- Liesha Ward Knox (Auckland Actors) as Jenny
- Astra McLaren (Red Eleven) as Stephanie
- Harley Neville (Kathryn Rawlings & Associates) as Henry
- Sam Jukes (Auckland Actors) as Isabelle
- And we have a supporting cast made up of 15-20 additional talented actors.

Our principal crew is:

- Adam St. John, owner of Saint Media Group (Sydney) as Director of Photography
- Leo Magri as Boom Operator
- Julie Clark, owner of MetamorFX (Auckland) as Head Makeup & Wardrobe
- And we have a supporting crew of 8-12 additional people!

We're lucky in the fact that Guy and Harley have been making short films and skits under the Pigville Productions name for years and have amassed a significant following. Because of that, we have been able to circulate our call-outs for cast on Facebook, not only to fans of the *Older* page but also the wider Pigville base. This gives us great reach and means that we can usually count on those call-outs to find the cast, crew

and locations we're looking for. And even when we don't, our friends and fans usually have some great ideas on other places to search!

### WHAT'S BEEN YOUR SHOOT HIGHLIGHT SO FAR?

I think my favourite scene so far is one where our main character Alex is hungover after a long night of drinking and is violently vomiting in the toilet at his house. I was tasked with the job of making fake vomit (my first time with such a task) and quite reveled in the process of coming up with something realistic looking that wasn't actually puke-worthy. In case you were wondering, it was Thai curry soup. But then I got to watch Guy waiting for 'action' with a mouthful of lukewarm fake vomit in his mouth over and over and over again. I have to say, his fake vomit sounds are a feather in his acting cap!

### ANY IN-JOKES ON SET?

According to Guy, the quote on set often repeated was "Cutaways, cutaways" because in film you can never have enough!

### YOU RECEIVED JUST OVER \$5K FUNDING FROM A GOAL OF \$25K IN YOUR INIDIEGOGO CAMPAIGN?

We set our sights high on our Indiegogo campaign and we knew that going in. I suppose you never know who is watching and we didn't want to cut ourselves off from a big contributor coming in and covering the full cost of the project. The ideal \$25,000 budget was what would have given us the funds to cover incidental costs in their entirety and also pay our cast and crew in full.

That being said, the budget we used to guide our decision making during pre-production was \$0. We operated under the assumption that any funds that we generated were helpful and so what we were lucky enough to have received has provided us only with opportunities. We raised enough to cover location hire, catering and props for all of filming, though not quite enough to be able to pay our cast and crew. ►





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*It's not a one-man show. It takes a lot of dedicated, talented and generous people to make a movie happen.*

Everyone involved in making *Older* is doing it for the love of the industry and their belief in the project. The positive energy that such passion generates is really amazing and makes this something quite powerful to be a part of. I suppose the overarching challenge of a low-budget film is just how passionate and dedicated the cast and crew are and the frustration in not being able to compensate people as we'd like to during production.

We are looking into the possibility of running another campaign to help us generate additional funds for post-production, as is common for films utilising crowdfunding.

#### DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIFIC TIPS ON CROWDFUNDING THAT YOU LEARNED USING INDIEGOGO?

Engagement with your contributors and the greater audience you're trying to reach is what I believe is the key to a successful crowdfunding campaign, so the biggest tip that I have is to leverage the power of the internet and social media as much as you can for the benefit your campaign.

We simultaneously launched our website, Facebook page and Indiegogo campaign to ensure that we had hit the key components of where people would naturally go to engage with our film. This afforded us lateral relationships with our contributors through multiple platforms and let us use Facebook as the primary vehicle through which we communicated with our fans. Having a solid social media plan, especially in the last few days of the campaign, is really important to getting the most out of the crowdfunding experience.

Once the campaign is started, it's quite a whirlwind of activity, stress and excitement. It's hard to not sit on the computer and hit refresh every minute or two as the funds come trickling in! But if you've laid the groundwork and know how to make your online channels work for you, then it's an extremely rewarding experience.

I think it's unbelievably important to have a strong online presence when you're presenting people with something they know little to nothing about. It's about facilitating the opportunity for people to learn about, engage with and be a

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*I believe that by making our movie and process more 'tangible' and real to people, it has improved interest and investment in the success of the film both financially and beyond.*



# THE NZ INDIE FILM MOVEMENT

**GUY PIGDEN - WRITER/DIRECTOR**

*(EXCERPT FROM OLDER'S INDIEGOGO CAMPAIGN)*

For over 14 years I've been making content jointly with my production partner Harley Neville. Together we are Pigville Productions.

We shoot with small crews and little to no money, and the people we work with are our super talented like-minded friends. We get the most out of very little because we focus on the quality of the character stories and performances, as those things don't always cost dollars but sure as hell make or break your films!

*Older* was written specifically to compliment our style, as it's an extension of the way we've always filmed our projects. It's not about spectacle, it's about the strength of the story. You know, the REALLY important stuff! There's no giant robots or monsters or superheroes, it's just about us HUMANS dealing with real life. And I know we can do it justice and make something amazing.

## FUNDING

In New Zealand there is only one way to get funding for films...and that's through the NZ Film Commission, a government-funded body. The Commission's job is to give out production financing to films they deem appropriate. And that's the problem, if your film doesn't fit their criteria, there is nowhere else to take your project to bring it to life.

And where does this leave all the filmmakers with projects that don't fit the Commission's criteria? Without NZFC funding and no other avenues to raise money, most NZ filmmakers and their films eventually wind up in the creative graveyard. A place full of great films from talented filmmakers that will never be made.

I took '*Older*' to the Film Commission and was unsuccessful in my application for development funding. This wasn't surprising as this is not a typical New Zealand film (In fact that's what makes it so good!). So I had to ask myself what next? At this point I made the choice to take responsibility for my story, and in the same way I wrote the script, write my own filmmaking destiny.

Because this isn't just about me and my project, it's about all aspiring filmmakers in New Zealand. I want *Older* to represent a greater movement for our industry and how we can empower ourselves and each other to make films without anyone's permission or approval. It's not about fame or fortune; it's about having the freedom and opportunity to do what we love.

part of the film as much as they choose to. For me, that meant having a rich background to the plot, some words from our director, bios about the awesome cast and crew donating their time to the film, great pictures for people to sink their teeth into and an active and lively social media presence.

I believe that by making our movie and process more 'tangible' and real to people, it has improved interest and investment in the success of the film both financially and beyond. We've got a lot of people rooting for us to succeed.

## WHEN WILL NEW ZEALAND AUDIENCES BE ABLE TO SEE THE FILM?


We're hoping that post-production will span over the course of the first half of 2014, with a tentative completion date around May-June of next year.

We think that New Zealand is ready for films that represent who we are as a country but don't isolate us. This film is a 'love letter' to Auckland and visually expresses so many places and things we love about the country we live in but is a story that isn't confined to New Zealanders or any single person in particular. It's one that we believe everyone will be able to see a little part of themselves within no matter who or where they are.

## WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR THE FILM DISTRIBUTION?

The thing with low-budget filmmaking is that it breaks all of the rules and conventions of how things are and 'should be' done. Therefore, despite the fact that we're wrapping up principal photography, nothing is set in stone at the moment when it comes to distribution of the film. While we'd be ecstatic for limited cinema runs, we're still in the process of exploring our options in this regard.

## ANY INSIGHTS YOU CAN SHARE FOR OTHER LOW-BUDGET FILMMAKERS?

I guess for me personally, being a new producer, the most amazing thing I've found over the course of making *Older* so far, is the power of 'asking.' I'm quite stubborn and always been convinced that I can do everything myself. And while I tell myself that's true...it's not actually and especially not in filmmaking. It's not a one-man show. It takes a lot of dedicated, talented and generous people to make a movie happen. I've had to really swallow my pride and learn to ask for help. When there's no budget and very little to leverage but my gratitude, I've had to learn to just come out and ask people for the things that I need. I mean, I was asking co-workers if I could borrow their children! And what I've learned is that even when it seems most likely that people will say no, they often surprise you and say yes. And that's really awesome and extremely humbling. 



[www.facebook.com/oldermovie](http://www.facebook.com/oldermovie)



[www.oldermovie.com/](http://www.oldermovie.com/)



[www.indiegogo.com/projects/older-the-movie](http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/older-the-movie)



# BEARD CHRONICLES

Earlier this year young New Zealand producers under 30 were invited to submit concepts for short-form documentaries profiling distinctive kiwi characters for the New Zealand Young Producer Shorts 2013.

In its third year, the initiative, run by BBC Knowledge and SPADA, awards each of the finalists a \$5k grant to produce a short-form documentary which premieres on BBC Knowledge (Sky) in early 2014.

Auckland, Ashley Pitman was one of five finalists in this year's New Zealand Young Producer Shorts 2013. The subject of his documentary is 34 year old Ygnacio Cervio, who having grown his facial hair for the last 20 years, represented New Zealand at the 2013 World Beard and Moustache Championships in Germany, in October.

Viewfinder talked to Ashley about his recently completed doco '*Beard Chronicles*'.

## HOW THE DOCO PROJECT CAME ABOUT

I've known Ygnacio since film school and he came to me at the start of the year and said he was entering the Beard Championships. He said you should film me getting prepared for the competition. It was as simple as that.

When we started, we were just making small videos for a web series for You Tube to see what happened. We did the first episode and then not long after that I got an email from South Seas about the NZ Young Producer Shorts from the BBC looking to fund five short films.

I applied and we stopped filming for a couple of months while we waited. In the meantime we were planning for the next couple of web episodes if we didn't get the funding. We planned for both scenarios; if we got the funding or if we didn't, but we got the funding and that ended the web series. We took what we had planned and flipped that into the film.

I'd sent a rough cut of the film for the competition and they seemed to love what we'd done so far. I think it's quite

a powerful idea and something that would interest a lot of people. A guy growing hair on his face to compete in a massive competition is not your usual run of the mill story.

Ygnacio has had hair on his face, I'm guessing, for the majority of his life, and I think he found out about the competition and he just wanted to enter it. He was just wanting to do something that's never been done, or just something bizarre, I think that plays off his character; he's a really unique person.

## DOCO MAKING PARTNERSHIP

Ygnacio was quite involved in the doco as well as being the talent; he helped me co-direct and edit.

We both come from film backgrounds so we both know how to make a film.

We do clash, but who doesn't? That happened recently with one of the edits, but you find common ground which boils down to if you like it, that's fine.

But working together has made this film cruisey to make, I'm not relying on just having myself to do all the work. Having someone else that knows that they're doing, makes it so much easier. We both know exactly what needs to be done; this is going to be an emotional scene and you need to do this and that, and we need to shoot it this way.

## THE BUDGET

I think \$5k is heaps because this is the first time I've ever received money to make a film. We could have done with a little more just to cover some extra costs, but we've been able to make the money cover everything that we've needed.

I have all my own gear and so we haven't had to rent





*A guy growing hair on his face to compete in a massive competition is not your usual run of the mill story.*

anything, we did have to buy a few extra bits, lens and batteries and memory cards that we thought we'd need. Other than that, we had to pay my flight to Germany.

## SHOOTING

We were shooting over eight months roughly, from about March right up until 30th October. We were shooting in our free time, or when we needed to film something. When we'd cut everything, we were missing a few things, so we'd just set up an interview on top of Mt Victoria. Ygnacio needed to get his beard trimmed before the competition – so we'd go to the barbers and film a little sequence there.

Before we left for the Beard Competition in Germany in October, we had the first half of the film done. The first half is about Ygnacio in New Zealand and the second half is more or less at the competition.

We have a ton of footage and it's unfortunate that the film is only 15 minutes so we can't show everything. We do have bits we haven't used, we had a little sequence where Ygnacio meets this guy that makes beard oil, that gives your beard a scent, but we didn't have the space to use it unfortunately.

## CREW

I do camera (Canon 60D) and edit with Ygnacio using Avid media. Other than that we have Jimmy McPhie, a great guy that does graphics. We have La Felix, as Musical Composer who is creating an original score and he's done a ton of tracks for us. And we have a sound editor, Mark Sloane, and Allan George doing colour correction.

Fortunately, they're willing to work for free. It's great to have people willing to help you out on a project that they think is cool.

When shooting on locations we use all natural lights. As for sound I just have a little mixer thing I use. Connecting the shotgun mic to the camera gets surprisingly good audio. We don't have the money for a boom and it's quite hard to rely on someone else. Our shoot times were like: oh right we're going to film today – it's hard to have someone that's that flexible for additional crew.

## HIGHLIGHTS

I really have enjoyed the whole process, it's what I want to do right now with my filming. Film people and tell someone else's story and to be able to go and fly around the world.

My head is in the doco space at the moment, because I can inspire and motivate people more with other people's stories.

## BACKGROUND

I graduated from South Seas in 2009 as a drama director and screenwriter towards my major, then after that I tried

freelancing in the film industry and found that incredibly hard. And then when I turned 21 I got a camera and I spent a good year teaching myself how to film and to use Avid to edit. I was filming little bits here and there, basically whatever I could to get experience and then I slowly started building up my skills and was able to start getting more professional work as a videographer. And that's pretty much what I've been doing for a year and a bit; videography, filming videos for companies and what not.

I think making your own work is a lot easier than the film industry, though it's hard work.

I also work as a pizza delivery driver on the side and that keeps me alive as well. Unfortunately I can't get enough work to stay afloat solely on what I love doing.

I get new clients by emailing them - asking if they need any video work done. Even if they say no, it's worth a shot. And it has paid off quite well. And then I get work through word of mouth and people I've worked with. I was doing a lot of video game filming so I've had quite a bit of success in that industry. I've gone over to Australia to film a couple of gaming events over there which has been really cool.

## THE FILM INDUSTRY DECLINE

I already found it hard, so how can it be any harder? I don't know if that will change or not. To be honest, I'm staying away from the film industry - as much as I'd like to make a movie I would rather be a director and doing a lower down role, I just find it too hard. It's such a competitive industry. Like they say it's who you know.


## THE TV PREMIERE

I don't know if I'll gather everyone to watch the doco on TV. I get really awkward; I know the first time I showed the rough cut to some of my family I was so nervous I was shaking. You don't really know what people are thinking...

## WHAT NEXT FOR THE DOGO

In the contract I think it states the BBC owns the film for quite some time. I'd love to put it online; when we were filming people from the States, they wanted to know when they could see it but it's only being shown in Australia and New Zealand. I hope it will be online, as that's where people want to watch it.

## ADVICE FOR INSPIRING DOGO MAKERS

I tell people to buy a camera and start filming every day, teach yourself how to edit and do everything. And then once you start getting good, people start paying you. But you just have to make a lot of rubbish to get there in the meantime. 



[www.facebook.com/BeardChronicle](https://www.facebook.com/BeardChronicle)

(profile)

I SEARCH THE FOOTAGE FOR THOSE MOMENTS OF MAGIC THAT HAPPEN.

AND THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT.

IT CAN BE MAGICAL. IT'S LIKE AN ADDICT, YOU'RE ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR THAT SAME HIGH.

# ANNIE COLLINS

## NEW ZEALAND EDITOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

BY MARIAN EVANS

*Gardening with Soul* was recently named Best New Zealand Documentary for 2013 at the NZ Film Awards in Auckland. Jess Feast's doco about Sister Loyola Galvin is a beautiful story about a nun in her nineties, a member of the remarkable Sisters of Compassion Order, founded by Mother Suzanne Aubert (1835-1926), who work 'in a spirit of compassion, openness and integrity to meet the needs of the aged, the sick, the oppressed and the powerless in our communities'.

The editor of *Gardening with Soul* was Annie Collins. Annie's a legend. She's worked on every kind of project imaginable: many features (including New Zealand classics from *Sleeping Dogs* and *Goodbye Pork Pie*, to *Scarfies* and *Out of the Blue* – Best Editing Awards for both as well as for last year's *Two Little Boys* – to *Lord of the Rings* and this year's *Shopping*); countless docos (a special love); short films (including Sima Urale's *O Tamaiti*, winner of the Golden Lion at Venice), commercials, corporate training videos (including a series on the law which won an ITVA Silver Monitor), trailers and promos. And in the predominantly small-budget New Zealand industry, where roles are often flexible, she's had to handle music, FX and dialogue, ADR, post-production supervision, lab liaison as well as the picture edit.

### EDITING IS SO STRAIGHTFORWARD THAT DIRECTORS CAN DO IT THEMSELVES. WHY DO THEY USE AN EDITOR?

There are a few directors around who can do that - who have such a clear vision and such a specific vision of what they're making that they should be cutting their own films. However, every director I've worked with has really enjoyed the collaboration of another head and another head coming from a

different angle, able to see in the footage things that they have missed, have gotten so used to that they are just overriding them, conceptual things they didn't see in the footage. When you're talking about documentary which is the main thing I'm interested in, there are often threads of ideas and concepts which an editor can see, but when the director has already sorted out the questions they want to ask, or feel that they know about the subject, they just ask a specific range of questions and miss all this sideline stuff. They even miss things that are in the frame because they're not expecting to see them so they DON'T see them.

### WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR EDITING?

When a director comes in and sits at this bench they have to be prepared to be challenged. If they're not prepared to be challenged then they don't stay with me for very long. And the first challenge is a very simple one: 'Why are you making this film? For what reason are you making this film?' In this country I use another word, I ask them what their kaupapa is, and in using that word I don't just ask them for their reason. I am asking in what spirit are they approaching this film. The kaupapa is a direct reflection of the director, of the director's

spirit in approaching something. And they have to be able to answer that in one sentence, because anything more than that – paragraphs of reasons – is bullshit. They have to know very very clearly why they're poking a camera at that person and exposing them to the world.

The next challenge is: 'Who are you talking to?' They have to answer that question, and it's not 'The whole world!' because that's just bullshit too. They need to be pretty clear about it. When *Gardening With Soul* came in, I knew who I wanted to talk to, but I didn't know who Jess wanted to be talking to.

## WHO DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO?

Young New Zealanders. Because Loyola is a role model and we don't have too many of them. Not up on film. We've these great hulking brutes who play rugby who can hardly string two sentences together but people who actually talk about the qualities of how they work? Of what's important to them or how they were brought up? What's important in life and what takes you through? No.

## WHAT ARE THOSE QUALITIES?

Humility, determination, real grit. A deep love for growing things. It's a caring that says the way that you can learn is by doing it yourself and you can. I'll stand back here and I'll guide you but YOU can do it. A self questioning and finding out answers for yourself, not looking for things to be delivered on a plate. Not expecting other people to fix things for you, just going out there and making it happen.

## DO YOU TRY TO MEET THE SUBJECT?

I avoid it at every opportunity.

One of the things that I do - it's one of the ways I try to maintain the integrity of dealing with people in documentary - is I use a process whereby I don't allow the director in (!) until I've had a good look at the footage. Until I've done a first cut of the footage. I've had a conversation with the director about all the ideas they think should be in the film which they set out to

capture and then I add the ideas which I've seen to that list and then I go through and cut those ideas. It's also my responsibility to give the director my initial response to the footage, whatever it might be. I might hate one particular section, I might say I'm not using this piece, I don't believe it. I don't believe anything about this, I think it's bullshit. Which is a fairly tough thing to say but that's said privately at the edit bench and the director takes it on, goes 'hmmmm, but I felt such and such with this', and then I am challenged. 'Why do I think that about it? Do I continue to think that every time I see that particular section?'

I'll be cutting two things: a series of concepts - those ideas, and I'll be cutting what I call reality sequences like Sister Loyola digging in the garden, having breakfast, her 90th birthday party, those are discrete sequences in their own right. That first pass over all the footage will take me between two to five weeks depending on how much footage I've got and there was a lot of footage for this, a lot of ideas...

I've got all that cut, and then I invite the director back in and we sit down and view all the cuts from top to bottom. The challenges then are the filmic challenges and how to make a sequence work. By that stage they are the technical and craft challenges but the lovely thing is that when the *raison d'être* of why you're sitting at that bench cutting this particular footage is clear, the craft and the technical challenges, they often just dance into place.

And it becomes very clear when we're viewing on a bigger screen whether we've got enough material to make a concept work, which of the reality sequences really carry you with them and are important to see. For example, the very last sequence in *Gardening With Soul* started out as twenty-five minutes of Sister Loyola and her helper digging over one of her gardens in Autumn.

Now the entire sequence is beautiful, it's gorgeous, because it just embodies all of the lifecycle that this woman is about. The care for the soil, the way she places the new compost in with all its wriggly worms is like the care that she would give children. Everything is there in that cycle. And then they ►



Left to right: Vicky Pope (Producer), Jess Feast (Director) and Annie Collins (Editor), *Gardening with Soul*

**WHY** ARE YOU MAKING THIS FILM? **WHO** ARE YOU MAKING THIS FILM FOR?



IN THE BEGINNING YOU HAD ONLY SO MUCH FILMSTOCK, YOU HAD TO BE CAREFUL HOW MUCH YOU USED

AND YOU **CHOSE** WHEN YOU ROLLED.

prepare the shed and the tools for the next day, and she leaves. When we had played down the twenty-five minute first cut, it came three quarters of the way through a week and a half's worth of work, and when it ended I turned to Jess with tears running down my face and said 'That's the end of the film'. And she agreed.

### WHY ARE YOU AN EDITOR AND NOT A DIRECTOR?

Crikey – why am I an editor? I know why I'm an editor and not a director, that's easy, but why am I an editor to begin with? Like so many things in life, I kind of lucked into editing. I didn't set out to be involved in film. In fact I was a wife, a housewife. Had a couple of jobs. But I guess I always had a lot of... hesitating over the word 'ambition', because I don't think that's really it. Right from early days I was driven to make as much of myself as I could, I was driven to extend myself, to find out what I could do. And that drove me out of the marriage and into Design School and from Design School into film. And into the area of film which was probably what was most at hand at the time because it was Pat Cox who suggested it to me. He'd just set up an independent editing service and he had guided me on one edit. So I started out in editing.

And there is something, there's something about the images that just drives me all the time. About putting them together, about that moment of connection between one shot and another, about what happens that comes out of it. It isn't just this shot and then that shot, it's what happens at that moment of intersection. It can be magical. And I would say that ever since 1975 when I first cut anything, it's like an addict, you're always searching for that same high. And all the time I'm searching in the footage no matter whether it's drama or documentary, but it happens more often in documentary, I'm searching for those moments of magic that happen. And there's nothing like it. I've tried to go away from editing but I can't. It's so magical. Every film is magical, every one of my films has something in it. Yeah.

### WHAT CHANGES DO YOU SEE HAPPENING?

The biggest changes that are happening are the attitudes towards the actual craft of filmmaking, especially documentary out in the field. Because it is digital, because

it is cheap to shoot, the discipline of focus, of walking into a situation and being focused enough that you understand what you need to point a camera at, of being focused enough to hear what you need to point your camera at – that has been massively eroded. In the beginning you had only so much filmstock, you had to be careful how much you used and you **CHOSE** when you rolled. The plus of digital is that you can shoot everything. It doesn't really matter how it's shot, you no longer need to be mentally focused, you no longer need to listen because someone is still rolling – they'll get it somehow. Well, no actually, they don't. And that's got to impact upon the subject while they're being filmed too. The problem is that the people who have grown up only with digital do not know the difference. They cannot recognise what they're doing. They cannot recognise the quality difference between focusing on someone when you're shooting them and just shooting.

### IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU WOULD STILL REALLY REALLY LIKE TO DO?

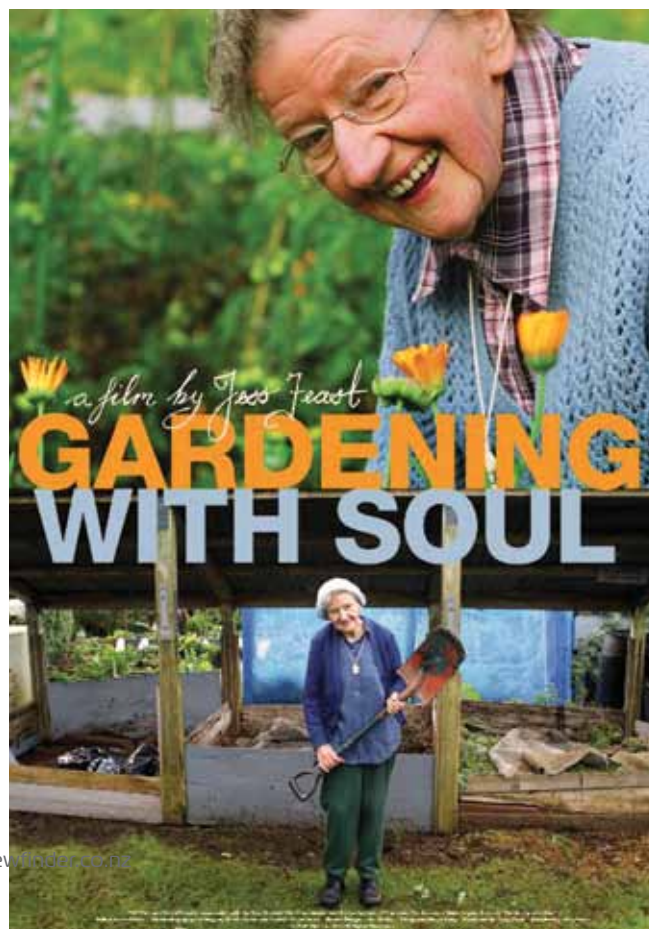
I would really like to work with a director that has a head that can really bounce off the wall! I would love to work with a director and writer who are not bound by the restrictions of chronology. I just would LOVE to move outside the narrative.

### TELL ME MORE!

Well, almost every feature film in this country has a beginning a middle and an end and it goes in one straight line. And it's basically as boring as batshit unless it's a really interesting story and not a lot of them are. I'm just blimmin intrigued about shifting time. Because you can do it in film and why aren't people doing it more? And the feelings, the magic that you can create by shifting time. And I'm not just talking let us have a flashback here or there, I'm talking real shifting of time. Example is Babel. Writer is Guillermo Arriaga - Mexican. I loved its shifting of time, the way that he played with it and you don't know it until the very last shot. 

To read the full article please visit:  
<http://wellywoodwoman.blogspot.co.nz/2013/09/annie-collins-nz-editor-extraordinaire.html>

Abridged and republished with kind permission from the Wellywood Woman blog by Marian Evans.



# PRODUCTION SPOTLIGHTS

Highlights from New Zealand film, video and web TV projects currently in production  
Visit [www.viewfinder.co.nz](http://www.viewfinder.co.nz) for more production updates

## PRODUCTION UPDATE: SHEPHERD 2154

With Julia Reynolds, Director of *Shepherd 2154*.

*Shepherd 2154* is a feature film – a few years in the making!

*Shepherd 2154* is about Eden, a 16 year old girl who struggles to survive in a dystopian world that is barely habitable. Searching for her future Eden she must face her past.

Hundreds of people have been involved to date in this low budget, large production Hamilton based Science Fiction drama. Filming is due to be wrapped up in early 2014.

### WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE FILM?

I read about a pilot flying back through Europe in the 1950's and all his instruments in his small aircraft went out - the pilot basically was lost and above cloud. Another plane came up beside him and 'Shepherded' him down. Shepherd is an aviation term for this type thing. Anyway when he got back to the hanger and asked about the plane the man on the ground asked for the plane's markings and when the pilot told the man, he revealed that the plane described had been shot down during the war.

It got me thinking about guides - what leads us, not just supernatural guides, but what makes us take the 'particular' journey in life that we do, there are always multiple options, possibilities - but only one path we end up taking. I found this interesting (and still do).

### YOU WROTE THE SCRIPT WITH YOUR SISTER WENDY COOK?


Yes, I originally wrote a short script, about 15 pages, this was back in 2007, but thought the story had potential to go in several directions so brought my sister in, to throw ideas around. We worked on the script for about two years, this included work-shopping the script, I think we got to around 11 drafts by the end. There was a major flash-back story around 25 pages of script. This is the part that has been completed, however since this first shoot I have gone back and re-written most of the script we are now heading towards.



### WHERE ARE YOU UP TO NOW PRODUCTION-WISE?

I filmed about 30 percent of the feature in December 2010 - probably the hardest part as this was the part set in space. The next part of the story is set on Earth. We are shooting the bulk in January and some smaller scenes in late February.

### YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE PROJECT FOR FOUR YEARS? (EPIC!) WHAT'S KEPT YOU MOTIVATED ALL THIS TIME?

I did give it up. Last year, I remember taking my dog for a walk thinking this is insane - I can't do this. I don't have the funds. It was simply that - I just don't have the money to make the film. But then, I started to think about what I did have, what the strengths were in the project. That's why I did a re-write, I realised I couldn't film it the way we had written the rest of it, so I simplified some parts and bought other parts, that I believe we are very strong in, to the forefront. I must say though, this has been one of the hardest things I have ever done. The project is overly ambitious, when I went to all those script-writing tutorials I didn't take the advice of 'write what you know'. I wrote something else. *Continued on [www.viewfinder.co.nz](http://www.viewfinder.co.nz)* 

 <http://igg.me/at/shepherd2154/x/339997>

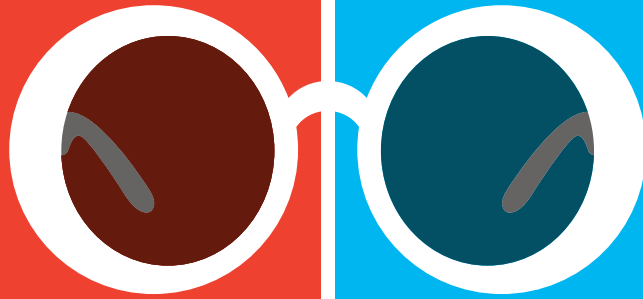
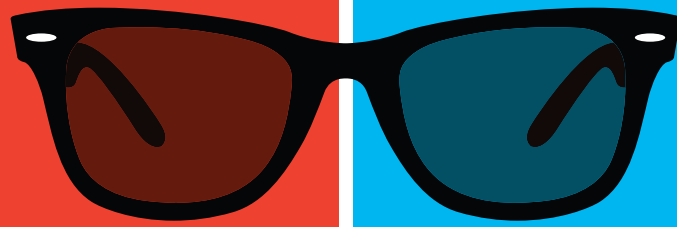
 [www.facebook.com/Shepherdfilm](http://www.facebook.com/Shepherdfilm)

## ALSO AT VIEWFINDER.CO.NZ:

- Spotlight: With Ben Childs Director/Co-Producer on *THE SPACE TRASH MEN* (Short Film)  
Currently – Post-production
- Spotlight: With Writer & Director Steven Baker on *ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE: A LOVE STORY* (Short Film).  
Currently – Post Production
- Spotlight: With Gary Davies, Writer, Director and Editor on *LABYRINTH ROCKS* (Short Film)  
Currently – in Production and shooting in January 2014

To include your project in our Production Spotlights email [Fiona@viewfinder.co.nz](mailto:Fiona@viewfinder.co.nz)

Visit [www.viewfinder.co.nz/productionlistings](http://www.viewfinder.co.nz/productionlistings) for a comprehensive list of New Zealand film projects in production, from funding stages to release.



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