

ANIMAL FARM

Short Film by Al Lim

Animal Farm explores the dark side of social media by showing how trolling works. I want to share an artistic view of how the industry works: how trolls push an agenda, sway public opinion, and praise/harass people online through the different aspects of Filipino life (politics, fake news, sex, showbiz, cyber-bullying). I also want to show how desensitized some of us are now with the graphic and sensationalized content we read/see online.

Inspired heavily by the visuals of such films as *Unfriended* (2014) and *Searching* (2020) and the heavy bleakness of *Black Mirror* (TV series), the majority of what will be seen in the short film will mostly be a desktop view of a social media network (similar to Facebook) as if a user is logged in, browsing through notifis, timeline, chat, etc., just as how a typical user sees his account on the monitor. It will be text and picture-heavy, with some videos/ live videos scattered about.

It will focus on 4 different accounts (based on multiple online Filipino behaviors/personas) with distinct visual tells. Scenes (or posts) transit in and out of the different accounts, showing their posts, comments, reactions, and interactions with the comments of strangers that follow.

As for the sound, it will be rhythmically paired with an original techno-electronic composition composed mainly of keyboard typing sounds and Facebook sounds (notifications, etc. – make it sound similar to Daft Punk). Just like music videos with stories, the action on the screen will be in tune with the music, telling a complete short story. Yung ups and downs, slowdowns, speed ups, tension-building, climax, etc. on screen will be in line and in tune with the music. Tone and emotions will be set by the combination of visuals and music, offering a complete audio-visual journey into the dark world of trolling.

CHARACTERS

Jason Banal (User 1) - pa-good boi guy next door type, young adult, medyo naïve but likeable, athletic, huge social circle

- POLITICS: Neutral, commends good gov't projects, condemns bad gov't news
- FAKE NEWS: Madaling maloko
- SEX: Sexy FB group member but mostly as an admirer, mostly there to like on sexy posts, doesn't comment
- SHOWBIZ: follows some celebrities, mostly reacts to funny comments
- CYBERBULLYING: kung trip mo, go lang, face the consequences mentality

Kid Sabayton (User 2) - full on troll, malakas mang-bash, mang-asar, as in tagos sa kaluluwa ang pang-aasar at linguahe, walang modo at respeto, sexist, manyak, jeje magtype, mahilig magpost ng memes, walang redeeming value as a human being

- P: Hardcore DDS, the copy-paste comment type
- FN: Nagkakalat ng fake news, naghahamon ng away sa comments
- SEX: Extreme manyak sa sexy fb group, laswa magcomment sa sexy posts
- SH: Troll pa rin sa celebrity news, spreads hateful memes vs anyone
- CB: Todo troll at cyberbully, as in makes the situation worse, urges suicide

Veronica Verde (User 3) - sophisticated tita type, dragon lady, corporate slave, galit sa trapik, mahilig sa showbiz news, secretly hates on posts ng friends nya, maneater, mahilig sa fitspiration / fitness posts, healthy living, etc, most likely to post a pic/story of a yoga pose with her dog along with a motivational quote

- P: Apolitical, basta pabor sa kanya ok sya
- FN: Walang pake sa fake news and news in general
- SEX: Nandiri sa lalake when she sees the post calling out sexist FB groups
- SH: Active sa celebrity news, updated sa latest chismis, has eye for fashion kaya malakas manglailait sa comments
- CB: Supportive naman sa cyber-bullied, sends an inspirational quote

Hiyas Bautista (User 4) - super ideologist woke college student, extremely anti-govt. Likes anime, hugot posts, and cats! Staunch supporter of human rights, gender equality, lgbt, etc., madaling ma-trigger, pasimuno ng cancel culture.

- P: Anti-gov't, as in walang tamang ginagawa ang govt
- FN: Calls out fake news (na pro-gov't)
- SEX: Actively condemns existence of sexist FB groups through posts
- SH: Pasimuno ng cancel culture, extreme supporter ng mga loveteam, fangirl ng K-pop at K-drama
- CB: Anti-cyberbullying, actively offers friendly advice & suicide hotlines

Yuppie Guy - owner of the 4 User profiles, your average yuppie corporate drone

Female Officemate - nagyaya ng yosi break, female yuppie corporate drone

Suicidal Girl - psychological breakdown on FB Live, shoots self in the end

STORYLINE (Scene Breakdown)

INTRO: 4 Users log in to FB one by one, typing in email/username, passwords. A vague silhouette/reflection on their individual screens (each account has a different colored UI [User Interface] to tell them apart from each other). Show the different personalities of the Users.

- User 1 (Jason) checks notifications, clicks on PBA update, likes and comments on Brgy. Ginebra win
 - sees birthday notifs, greets happy bday to his friends
 - shares a bible quote post
- User 2 (Kid) reacts lol on a meme, comments a mean lewd joke
 - bashes an ML livestream, trolls the livestreamer
 - Scrolls to same Brgy. Ginebra win post earlier, trolls Ginebra haters
 - hearts and comments (in a manyak way) on a beach bikini picture of a female friend that pops up in his timeline
- User 3 (Veronica) sees a pic of her friend's baby. She types in "di kamukha ng tatay," sa comment but deletes it. Types in "cute naman ng baby!" Instead.
 - likes and saves a post about fitness and another regarding travel, high fashion, branded bags, etc.
 - checks her previous humblebrag post of her yoga + motivational quote picture, reacts and replies to positive new comments, then proceeds to call the mean commenters as haters, inggiteras
- User 4 (Hiyas) likes and shares a UN or PETA post, basta may cause
 - likes and comments on an anime post of her friend
 - reacts to a hugot post
 - reacts and comments on a cute but silly cat video

MIDDLE: User 3 (V) sees a traffic post on her timeline, proceeds to bash the MMDA. This is the transition to the **POLITICS** portion (posts mirror our current political issues, controversies, etc.)

- User 3 (V) then scrolls down to a post regarding jeepney modernization, she likes it, shares it as well but her caption completely shits on the rallying jeepney drivers, bashing on them not being progressive and their limited education and socio-economic status
 - User 4 (H) comments, throws shade on this program and gives an insight on the plight of the jeepney drivers

- User 1 (J)'s timeline shows a legit news report about an Army victory vs. Abu Sayyaf, he likes it and comments "mabuhay ang mga bayani!" and then show the rapid influx of reactions and comments (mostly positive) by the other public users
 - User 2 (K) hearts the article, comments "dabest talaga govt!"
 - User 3 (V) likes article, comments "sa wakas safe na ulit magtravel sa southern islands!"
 - User 4 (H) comment - pastes a negative news article against Army with an anti-govt comment
- User 2 (K) scrolls to a legit news report about the CBCP, and comments about their hypocrisy, calling all of them child molesters.
 - Another person replies negatively to his comment and he just trolls the shit out of the replier
 - User 4 (H) types in a comment, but redacts her comment, seemingly opting not to reply vs User 2 and be baited, but quickly types in her original reply anyway and posts it. Flame war ensues
- User 4 (H) then shares a post about CHR investigating nanlaban cases, condemns govt, comments start to get divisive
 - User 1 (J) leaves angry react
 - User 3 (V) skips the post entirely
 - User 2 (K) quickly copy-pastes a canned pro-govt reply, bashing every anti-govt comment that follows
 - Influx of reactions and replies from the public

It then transitions into **FAKE NEWS** when User 2 (K) shares a dubious article about EJK stats and its effectiveness (obviously a fake propaganda article)

- User 1 (J) likes it
- User 4 (H) calls out the misinformation, propaganda
- User 3 (V) skips it, keeps on scrolling down past every political post on her feed
- User 4 (H) shares an anti-govt article from RABBLER (Rappler)
 - User 1 (J) reacts thumbs down
 - User 2 (K) calls it out as another tactic by the delawans trying to spread misinformation, hundreds like his comment, more flame war follows
- User 4 (H) then scrolls down to a Mocha poll asking people if they believe the conspiracy of large local media companies are being funded by the CIA.
 - User 4 (H) laugh reacts and comments about how ludicrous this sounds
 - User 1 (J) votes undecided

- User 2 (K) votes yes, comments na US nagfufund sa delawans at mass media to destroy his beloved govt inciting another flame war
- Influx of yes' and no's and bashing, mean comments from both sides
- A stranger comments on the Mocha poll, linking to her old sexy photos, saying nakakamiss yung classic Mocha Girls.
- User 1 (J) clicks on the link

This transitions to the **SEX** portion after User 1 (J) clicks on the link, it loads a secret group page where photos and videos of scantily clad women are posted

- User 1 (J) likes the page, then likes the classic Mocha Girls picture
- User 2 (K) hearts and comments Amen, followed by a hundred more likes from the other members of the group
- User 2 (K) then shares a sexy pic of a celebrity to the group, commenting eto ang ambag nya for the day
 - User 1 (J) just likes again, followed by a hundred more likes and amens
 - More sexy pics and vids are posted and Users 1 and 2 along with hundreds more react and type in amen
- User 4 (H) then shares a post warning the public about the existence of secret sexist and misogynistic groups and their manyak ways
 - User 3 (V) comments, "yuck! ang baboy talaga ng mga lalake" then scrolls down to a pic of a hunky male model, heart reacts it
- Switch back to User 1 (J) as he scrolls down to a dubious video promising the latest NSFW celebrity scandal. Mouse hovering, thinking hard if he should click
 - Switch to User 2 (K) also stumbles on the same video post. He clicks without hesitation, naturally

Rick rolled! It's a meme of a Xander Ford-type celebrity! This transitions to the **SHOWBIZ** segment as User 2 (K) reacts lol and comments harshly regarding Xander's new (and old) face.

- User 4 (H) butts in, defends Xander's choice
- Mini flame war ensues
- User 3 (V) stumbles upon an album from a celeb party, criticizes the gowns and fashion sense of various celebs, more comments and reacts follow
- User 4 (H) shares K-pop news, hundreds react and comment. Fangirls!
- User 2 (K) sees a post about Gerald Anderson-type celebrity and his latest flame. He comments "petmalu talaga ni LODI!"

- User 1 likes the post, comments “LODI!”
- Followed by hundreds/thousands more, mostly male users
- User 3 (V) scrolls to an article about a Jake Zyrus-type celebrity. Types in a non-PC tita joke about Jake’s gender
 - User 4 (H) is triggered, defends Jake’s choice, tries to cancel User 3
 - They fight on the comments amongst a hundred other users
- User 1 (J) then stumbles upon a poll asking which is the best K-Drama series, as he votes in, an influx of votes for the different series’ add up, passionate comments and bashing follow.
 - Leads to a total flame war in the comments section. Over which K-Drama series is the best of all time.
- Then as User 4 (H) is about to type in and post a comment, a messenger chatbox pops up, saying “OMG! Check this out! Dali!” Followed by a FB Live link. She clicks on the link.

Link opens up to an FB Live of a clearly depressed and distressed teenage girl contemplating suicide. This is the transition to the final **CYBER-BULLYING** segment.

Since FB Live sya, daming public comments and reactions flying by the screen

- At first, maraming supportive comments ang lumalabas
- User 4 (H) links a suicide hotline, trying to help the suicidal girl
- User 3 (V) shares an inspirational quote, then says wag mo ituloy yan, ma-BV lang ako at iba pang tao
- Generally more supportive comments follow, giving tips on handling depression, some guilt tripping her if she commits suicide
- However, User 2 (K), the forever troll stumbles upon the same FB Live video. He then starts hating on the suicidal girl. Some of the comments start becoming harsher, egging and daring the suicidal girl to go on and end her life, belittling the real life implications of their words and its toll on the suicidal girl’s psyche/mental state.
 - User 2 (K) continues trolling the suicidal girl, now getting more unhinged and unstable
 - User 1 (J) dares her to do it if yun ba gusto nya talaga, asking if she is ready to face the consequences of her actions
 - More personal attacks are thrown at the suicidal girl, savage nonsensical superficial jokes about her looks, family, gender, background, sexuality, etc, are viciously thrown at her
 - Her self-esteem is going down as the mean comments (ranging from mababaw to bastusan) and laugh reactions pile up.

- Then the suicidal girl says she means it this time, tatapusin na nya buhay nya. She whips out a pistol and aims it at the side of her temple, threatening to pull the trigger and ending everything.
 - Mean comments continue on at a consistently rapid pace.
 - The comments of the 4 Users are quickly buried due to the quick succession of comments, suicidal girl starts to screech
 - As her screeching reaches its highest along with the continuous rapid hate/trolling/bashing on the comments, the suicidal girl suddenly pulls the trigger. Loud bang. Flash.

END: Quickly transition to Yuppie guy in an office environment.

- Yuppie Guy is startled from the gunshot (Camera angle from the keyboard, reaction nya as if parang biglang nagising from a nap, but not OA shocked).
- He then stares at his monitor silently, collecting his bearings (camera still from angle of keyboard facing him). He is a bit shookt as if he suddenly woke up from a nap.
- Then a female officemate walks up to his workstation.
 - She asks Yuppie Guy, “ano na naman yan? Tara yosi break muna tayo. Sobrang stress ng work today.”
 - Yuppie guy scoffs at the idea, then gives a small wry smile, then agrees to go on a yosi break.
- As Yuppie guy stands up and goes out with officemate, the audience finally sees what is on his workstation
 - He has 4 monitors
 - One by one the monitors are shown
 - They are the accounts of the four users, each account has its own color (different colored UI to tell the users apart)
 - Complete with post it notes on the sides of the monitors detailing the different users’ affiliations and characteristics
 - However, the live feed of the suicide’s aftermath is left on the monitors: silence and blood splatters.
 - Then the camera zooms out of the desktop and monitors, leading to the whole view of guy’s workstation, then upwards away from guy’s cubicle
- As the camera continues to zoom out and upward (similar to Raiders of the Lost Ark final scene) the audience finally sees and realizes it’s an entire office filled with numerous workstations with multiple monitors.
 - It’s a troll farm.
 - Title card “Animal Farm”

- Quick transition to black and credits

ALTERNATE ENDING (Lighter version)

- As the suicidal girl is about to shoot herself on FB Live, everything goes black. Then office lights slowly turning back on, camera then shows yuppie office guy reacts to the power being on again. It turns out there was a blackout/power outage.
- Just as Yuppie guy sighs in relief, the female officemate goes to his workstation and invites him for a smoke break while everything reboots. He agrees to join.
- Then the same ending of showing his workstation (the 4 screens but now powering back on and going back to their FB timelines, showing these 4 user accounts are yuppie guy's troll accounts). Then same ending showing the scale of the troll farm (similar to Raiders of the Lost Ark final scene).

WRITER'S STATEMENT

Modern trolling is done differently these days, mostly through mobile devices. But the best in the business still employ formal office setups for technical reasons. The reason I chose the office setup than the modern version of mobile trolling is because I want to show foremost that trolling is a business. Trolls may seem like die-hard fanatics online but in reality, most of them are in on it because they need the paycheck. It's just another job.

I also want to show that even though social media trolling is prominently seen in our country through political lenses, it can be used outside of this scope as well. These troll companies can be employed to destroy a target's online influence, may it be a celebrity, businessman, an entire business, or just a regular Juan. Ultimately, anyone can be targeted, as long as the price is right.

Lastly, I want to show the audience the disparity between reality and social media. I want to show that at the end of the day, our social media profiles are not who we are in reality (4 profiles vs the yuppie office guy). Your social media persona is fake, a fake digital version of you.

However, these fake personas of ours, when abused and left unchecked, can still lead to real dire consequences for others who are more susceptible to the influence of social media, especially the younger generation who are heavily dependent on social media (the suicidal FB Live girl).