

# Treatment - by Charlie McMahon

This Multi-Platform Project treatment is proposed to 'Tracking Shot' for their multi-platform film competition. The festival aims to promote and create more interest in the educational 'Tracking Shot' film school. Research reveals that the 'crime' genre is the most favourite genre in 84% of females and 79% of males ([Statista, 2018](#)). This project strives to create a relatable and engaging film, incorporating key genres such as mystery, suspense and crime through the modern coming-of-age story of a teen who has the seemingly impossible task of stopping a devastating hacking attack on the world.

*Violet Butterfly* is a multi-platform crime web series based on a teenage crime-fighting sleuth – but with a twist. While seemingly innocent and meeting the typical stereotypes on the outside, the protagonist's parents turn out to be the real antagonists behind the story's initial and main complication. The series works on the premise that viewers are challenged with the effects of different plot obstacles for each episode. Clues are uncovered gradually, as are the backstories of characters, allowing viewers to develop connections with characters. The five-minute teaser pilot contextualises the series, with the protagonist, Chase, going out to a coffee shop with his girlfriend, Becky. Unknown to him, just hours earlier, his parents launch a massive cybersecurity hack: Operation Violet Butterfly, which ends up draining his savings account entirely. When Chase discovers that he has been digitally robbed, he is initially confused, saddened and angry, but then determined to discover who is responsible and seek justice.

This multi-platform project will be presented as an interactive web series where the audience can learn about the lives of each of the primary and secondary characters on a themed, interactive website. The shows will be released on the website first (before any other streaming services) in order to create traffic towards the site, including virtual countdowns to increase the hype before each episode releases. This will accelerate publicity around itself. Additionally, each of the characters in the series will have character 'profiles' with information relating to their personalities. The story world will be extended as the audience can feel a sense of relatability when they read about the characters' hobbies, interests, as well as facts and ideas relating to them. This multi-platform approach will offer audiences selective control as there are many different points of entry into the story, which, in turn, provide deeper engagement and more context. Each platform will encourage the use of the other platforms. Therefore, the website also includes links to social media accounts created for the fictional characters in the series in order to create a more cohesive multi-platform approach and deeper viewer engagement. Much like the interactive website, social media accounts will post background information on each character, otherwise not known to the audience viewing the series. Specifically, the Twitter accounts for the characters will post quotes and thoughts regarding the series, and the Instagram accounts will post extra photos relating to the characters. These profiles will link directly to the pilot, where Chase can be seen tweeting about their day with a selfie and using messaging services to chat with Becky. The audience is invited to post comments and reply to tweets from the series in real life, with comments that support the future storyline being shown later and woven into the series. Also later in the series, the main character can be heard bragging about their real-life follower count, which the audience can control.

In the pilot sequence, the common tv trope that 'technology dictates our lives' can be justified when Chase's online-only bank account gets hacked. In his cashless world, he has digitised his money entirely, and his reliance on technology is very clearly symbolised. By analysing the mise-en-scene of the kitchen scene at the start of the pilot episode, the audience can clearly view this technology-infused household inhabited by the tech-savvy family. For example, in the kitchen scene, an open laptop, Google Nest Wifi, a Google Home, and some Apple smart product boxes act as

symbols to the pro-technology views of the family. In the bedroom, the smart alarm clock is the first thing they touch when they wake up also symbolises this, along with the smartphone on the desk and a Google home mini on the opposite bedside table. Clearly, technology dictates their lives.

To build emotional involvement and tension, when Chase realises his bank account has been hacked, a close-up shot zooms in on his face and displays his emotion and realisation that he has lost all of his hard-earned savings. To symbolise this immense sadness and weakness, a vignette is overlayed onto the shot, and the tint colour changes to a deep blue, emphasising the sadness of the situation with colour psychology. In the scene where the henchman is hacking and using computer technology for evil, the ambient lighting changes to red, which symbolises the key intent for evil. In the phone call scene, the juxtaposition between the light, neutral kitchen and the evil, dark red lair demonstrates the evil behind the supposedly innocent-looking family. These colours comprehensively shift the audience's mood to align with what Chase is feeling, allowing for a deeper bond between the fictional characters and the real world, while heightening tension.

The music and sound effects play a key role in the audience's emotion and connection to the story. When the story starts out, quietly chirping birds can be heard in the background in order to calm the audience before suddenly stopping in the kitchen scene, and changing to suspenseful music in the phone call scene where the hacking begins. A high-heart rate heartbeat can be heard in the background while the hacking occurs, increasing the audience's anticipation and concentration on the story. After the hacker releases the attack, the music dies back down and is soon replaced with a popular relaxing song, and allows the audience to shift their mood accordingly.

The project is a contemporary digital media diegesis conveyed through multi-platform media and dispersed across multi delivery channels. Suspense, crime and mystery are central themes and the complementary media platforms not only enhance and increase audience appetite for entertainment, but evoke emotions to highlight the importance of personal digital security through the narrative.

Pilot Production References:

Sound Effects: (Mixkit, 2021)

Music: 'Sugar' by Maroon 5 (Edited by Charlie McMahon) & 'Anticipation' by Fesilyan Music

## Reference List

Mixkit (2021). *Mixkit - Awesome free assets for your next video project*. [online] mixkit.co. Available at: <https://mixkit.co/>.

Statista (2018). *Favorite movie genres in the U.S. by gender 2018 | Statista*. [online] Statista. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/254115/favorite-movie-genres-in-the-us/>.

Stewart, C. (2018). *Nelson film, television and new media. QCE units, 1-4*. South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia: Cengage Learning Australia.

