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FLM216.1 Short Drama Example 1

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MISERY
LOVES
COMPANY

CONTENTS

(Baseline Submission Requirements)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

| | |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Title | Misery Loves Company |
| Length | 6-9 Minutes |
| Genre | Mellodrama / Coming of Age / Tragedy |
| Budget | \$1000 - \$1200 |
| Shoot Date | 13th-16th of July |

Blown together by fate, three broken men find solace in time they have
together.

Synopsis

It's a cold winter day when Morgan arrives in Melbourne, a world away from his home in the UK.

He has arrived alone and carries the memory of his most recent breakup but finds himself quickly swept up by two new fast friends.

Bon and Alex.

A friendship flourishes between them, helped along by camaraderie in the face of adversity.

But life is tough, and even with the support of friends someone could crack and in a moment a night of laughter becomes a fight for life.

When all is said and done you can only do the best with the time you have.



COMPARISON FILMS

Cinematography

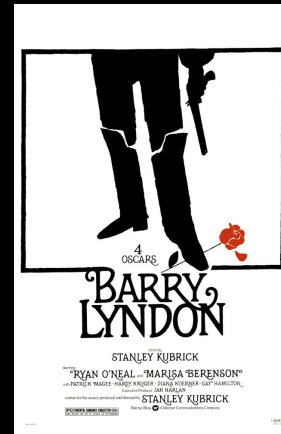
Lighting



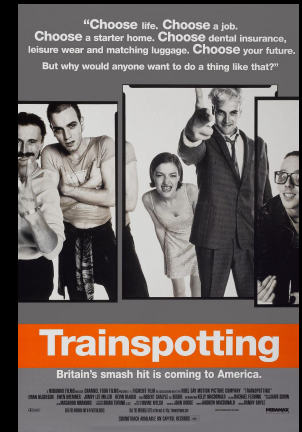
Manchester By
The Sea (2016)



Baby Reindeer
(2024)



Barry Lyndon
(1975)



Trainspotting
(1996)

DIRECTORS STATEMENT

Loneliness is something we can all relate to especially in your early 20's starting your life it is too easy to leave things behind and isolate yourself. 'Misery Loves Company' is about finding new connections and how quickly they can become the biggest part of your life.

I connected with this script from the second I read it, Hamish has a way of writing that feels so natural and I can't wait to bring this story to life.



Bon

A scruffy Brunswegian with an unstoppable drive for music and his self expression. Though hamstrung by substance abuse he almost never fails to give his most positive self to his friends.



Alex

A smaller quieter man, more interested in observing and capturing moments on his camera. Most times calm and collected but constantly scanning and aware of his surroundings. Shrewd and uneasy around those he's not familiar with.



Morgan

Fresh from the UK after a recent breakup. He is aimless but means well, working enough to get by but constantly finding himself thrown about by life's currents. His focus is always on his interpersonal relationships and finding his way.



Poppy

A friendly, beautiful regular at the local pub, she is aware of her effect on the people around her and cant help but use it to her best interests.

Kind but volatile, and still yet to learn the full extent of her actions.

Hannah

Bon's long term on and off again partner. From a proper family and well put together but with a streak for getting into mischief. Though her and Bon are deeply in love with each other they do not work as a couple, small arguments becoming catastrophic on a regular basis.



Cinematography

The cinematography will start intentionally wide, conveying Morgan's loneliness and isolation in his new surroundings. Everything is stark and harsh, the place so different and foreign.

The camera is far away and stationary. Morgan looks small and surrounded.



Cinematography

After Morgan meets his new friend, the camera gets closer, the aperture widens. Things become soft as Morgan eases into his surroundings, the background blurring away - almost as if the trio are in their own little bubble, and we, the audience, are allowed inside. The camera picks up some movement, gains a little life.





Lighting

The lighting at the start will be very cold, at once to convey the dreariness of the weather but also the unforgiving unfamiliarity of the environment through Morgan's perspective. As he becomes more comfortable, so too shall the lighting; warmer tones to signify the warmth and camaraderie Morgan finds with his new friends.



Set design



Set in mostly rural areas in Melbourne

aim capture the essence of a cloudy and moody day in inner north Melbourne.

Melbourne winter, gloomy, depressing yet lively representing the characters mental state.

small usage of yellow on set to symbolize a thread of hope.



Costumes

for costumes we want the look of young brunswick musicians/ Australian indie bands.

Winter melbourne clothing and style.

Small use of yellow on outfits to symbolize a thread of hope.

Morgan will have a slightly different style from the others being from England. his outfits will develop over time to be more similar to his friends. then a separate outfit at the end as time has passed.



Props

- Guitar
- Lockbox
- keys
- suitcase
- phones
- Fake cocaine
- luggage
- box of "Knick Knacks"
- cans
- cut mirror
- cigarettes
- Jug of water
- pot plant
- Coffee table
- Mattress
- Pints and glasses



Scoring & Sound Design

- Minimal scoring needed through dialogue heavy scenes. With more focus on clarity, foley and atmos. Realist.
- Drug sequence will feature DIY punk, indie rock, folk & metal influences with the intent to pay homage to inner north indie musicians.
- 'Bon's Chords' will feature diegetically multiple times throughout.
- Preparing the audience for an emotional payoff in the final scene. Scoring should be suitably wistful and ethereal as the film ends
- An ambient soundscape with accents of punk and indie (timbre) developing into a chaotic and frenetic crescendo at the culmination of the staircase scene. Think experimental, foreboding, dissonant and heavy but with a thread of positivity.
- Preference for Minor (natural, melodic or harmonic) keys to contrast with Bon's Chords (Major). If modulating out of minor, preference is Mixolydian Mode.

Sound Design

- Most important during Drug and staircase sequences.
- Needs to convey the experience of both sonically without muddying up existing scoring and dialogue. detailed accents / earcandy to support visuals.



- REFERENCE PLAYLIST -

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1A0BII2MOrHuCGGTHIJ79E?si=442525e8da264d5b>





Editing

- Inclusion of a title card, to be designed by myself.
- Classical editing style throughout most scenes with a focus on maintaining a slow pacing. Moving into a post-classical style of editing in both drug and staircase scenes.
- These scenes will be fast and frenetic with use of glitchy, almost psychedelic transitions. Splitscreens may also be included in order to condense the montage down even further.
- see 'Off the Air' for transition examples.
- Selection of shots from staircase scene will bias towards capturing emotion rather than action. This will help contribute to a confusing and chaotic experience for the viewer while maintaining focus on what is important (also allows some wiggle room for navigating a hard scene to block and may remove the need to have a 'stunt')
- All elements should remain cohesive and maintain a sense of flow

Sizzle Reel



PRODUCTION

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| Script | 10 pages |
| Shoot | 4 days |
| Cast | 5 people |
| Locations | 5 |

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

THEMES & VALUES

Camaraderie

Symbiotic support

The value of friendship

The sometimes ethereal

nature of relationships

Mental Health

Depression

Suicide

Substance abuse

Broken people are still of worth

Healing through creativity and

collaboration

Appreciating the time you have

with people

Isolation

Culture shock

Loss

Pain (working through pain)

Fate

Initially when beginning to ideate the concept that would become the screenplay for *Misery Loves Company*, the key theme that I wanted to express was that of a refusal of the idea that one must always look out for themselves first; and that if one is struggling with mental health issues that they are not capable or equipped to help out those close to them. As the narrative began to develop it followed this intent becoming a story about depression, suicide, camaraderie and the value of friendship even if it is only for a time.

In *Cinemas of Therapeutic Activism*, Adam Szymanski likens depression to a pandemic, citing skyrocketing diagnostic rates and depression's place as the world's leading cause of disability. With approximately 250 million people living with depression worldwide, the use of the word pandemic seems apt, especially when we consider the 800,000 people who commit suicide each year. (Szymański, 2020). I like to write stories that can not only resonate with me but also with as many of those around me as possible. There is nothing fantastical about mental illness, it is very real and grounded in the human experience, something that almost everyone has experienced or observed.

A recent media example that explores similar themes is *Baby Reindeer*, coincidentally set in the same place in which the events that inspired *Misery Loves Company* took place. *Baby Reindeer*, is an incredibly vulnerable representation of mental health issues and depression which also happens to feature a symbiotic relationship, one of codependency. However it is a much more toxic relationship than that which is represented in our film. Importantly however, it also represents how some broken people may have a level of implicit understanding of the other's struggles.

In *Depression and Narrative : Telling the Dark*, Hillary Clark speaks to the isolating nature of depression specifically , “When not viewed as antisocial, weak-willed, or narcissistic, depressed persons are often ostracised to another margin, where uni- and bipolar illnesses are seen to be part of a creative disposition” (Clark, 2008). Even within the space of mental illness greater, the depressed can fall into even greater isolation through no fault of their own beyond the effects of depression on the individual's “emotional state and interpersonal conduct”. This is precisely why I believe that it is those who are in the thick of it, the ones who share the experience, that are actually the most well equipped to help. Furthermore, teaching or helping those close to you is a great way to also learn and reflect upon your own experiences and struggles, where helping your friend is an act of service unto yourself.

When considering how prevalent depression is as a mental health issue, the popular reception of media tackling mental health issues and the need for more media that continues to explore these issues; I believe that our film thematically is of sound value to us as creators and audiences wherever this may screen. Many people resonate with the idea of ‘United we stand, divided we fall’ with the phrase and theme appearing ubiquitously in media ; Taylor Swift, Tupac, Grand Theft Auto 5, Fallout 4, M*A*S*H, Harry Potter, Power Rangers, etc. Even appearing in the bible, The concept of camaraderie is naturally engaging for us as social creatures and I believe that this is the perfect scope through which to present an exploration of the effects of depression.

The final key theme present in our film is that of fate or the ethereal nature of some relationships. As much as one might want to or expect to be friends with someone forever, fate is not always going to allow for that. I believe that while that may be the reality, acting under the presumption that “yes, you are going to be together forever” is a powerful intent allowing you to give as much of yourself as possible to the people around you. If it turns out not to be the case however, then being able to accept the reality of the situation is necessary but only then.

It is that position which I find myself in now, but I still want to continue doing my part or at least satisfy a sense of due diligence and I believe that our film will be a great message to those who have experienced or are experiencing the same struggles, with hopes that it can help bring them some inspiration or peace.

-Hamish Muir

References

Clark, H. (2008). *Depression and Narrative*. State University of New York Press.

SzymańskiA. (2020). *Cinemas of therapeutic activism : depression and the politics of existence*. Amsterdam University Press.

GENRE CONVENTIONS

Drama / Tragedy

This short film will explore the genres of drama and tragedy. Rabiger and Hurbis-Cherrier (2020) state that at the centre of a dramatic story, there is conflict (p. 42). The characters in our film face many conflicts, both internal and external. These characters have wants, needs, goals - it is essential for drama that the audience is engaged with the characters and their struggles, and these wants, needs, setbacks, make them more relatable. Drama, like all art, is trying to elicit an emotional response from the viewer. The more human the characters seem, the better chance we have with really connecting with our target audience. A recent success story, one that relates to this short film through subject matter - namely, mental health issues - is *Baby Reindeer*, a limited series created by Richard Gadd and published by Netflix. The success of this series proves that drama stories dealing with the subject matter of mental health issues resonate with a massive amount of people. At its core, drama deals with human issues, human conflicts. When we consume drama stories, we gravitate towards the real, human aspects - aspects such as tragedy. "Tragedy is said to be universal, which is true enough if one has the everyday sense of the word in mind. Grieving over the death of a child, a mining disaster or the gradual disintegration of a human mind is not confined to any particular culture." Eagleton, 2020 (p. 1)

GENRE CONVENTIONS

This quote from Eagleton (2020) posits that tragedy is a language that anyone can understand. People are surrounded by tragedies every single day, whether on the news or personally. It's something we are very good at recognising, and therefore we connect and sympathise with it very easily. Therefore, our short film will be exploring two genres which are innately human, instantly relatable, easily understandable. We feel that these genres will serve as excellent vessels for the subject matter we want to portray, which as stated earlier, is mental health issues and their consequences. Our main characters all face the internal conflict of struggling with mental health issues. The goals, wants, needs of these characters is the conflict, providing the drama which drives the story. Tragedy can be found in the consequences of these mental health issues, as well as the consequences of the unhealthy methods of coping with them. Our characters find themselves in a negative cycle of unhealthy coping methods as they strive towards their goals. The main conflict of mental health issues leads to setbacks and in turn other conflicts and obstacles to overcome, such as unhealthy relationships and drug abuse. The tragedy lies in this negative spiral; for a while, their struggles seem futile, things go from one step forward to two steps back. Again, this is something that we believe many people will be able to relate to, this is why we know it's an important story to tell. The struggles of these characters make them human; even if we cannot personally relate to the experience, it is in our nature to recognise tragedy and sympathise with it. This is why we believe the genres of tragedy and drama will only further enhance our story and the characters found within it.

GENRE CONVENTIONS

Eagleton, T. (2020). *Tragedy*. Yale University Press. p. 1.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/sae/reader.action?docID=6273007>

Rabiger, M., & Hurbis-Cherrier, M. (2020). *Directing : film techniques and aesthetics* (Sixth edition). Routledge. p. 42

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351186391>

SCHEDULE

PRODUCTION CALENDAR

W2

| June 1st | June 2nd | June 3rd | June 4th | June 5th |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------|---|----------|
| | Production Meeting #1 (All HODs) | | Production Meeting #2 (Director & Producer) | |

W3

| June 8th | June 9th | June 10th | June 11th | June 12th |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| | Casting Call goes out | Production Meeting #3 (All HODs) | Location Scouting #1 | |

W4

| June 15th | June 16th | June 17th | June 18th | June 19th |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Auditions #1 | Auditions #2 | Production Meeting #4 (All HODs) | Launch Crowdfunding Campaign |

PRODUCTION CHECKLIST TRACKER

| Producer | Check | DP | Check |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Create Casting Calls | - | Script Breakdown | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Crew Contracts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Shot List | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Release Forms | - | Storyboard | - |
| Hazard Forms | - | Director Feedback | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Insurance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | LUT Creation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Budget | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lighting Plan | - |
| Crowdfunding | - | Test Shoot | - |
| Meeting Minutes | - | Mud Maps | - |

THE TEAM



Hamish Muir
Writer/Editor



**Alyhurt
Smith-Foley**
Director



**Lucas
Bannister**
DOP



Ethan Stubbs
Producer



Molly Sizer
Co-Producer/
First AD



**Logan
Stewart**
Production
Design

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS

Crew Statement & Project Evaluation

(Submitted Individually)



Crew Statement

(Individual Component)

An individual, 350-word crew member statement outlining your personal connection to the project's themes and the importance/relevance to a target audience.

Include at least one scholarly reference (in-text citation and APA 7).



Pitch Deck Appraisal

(Individual Component)

A 250-word project evaluation detailing the overall performance of the project, key lessons acquired relating to the project's purpose, and approaches to improving the project for next time.

Include at least one scholarly reference (in-text citation and APA 7).