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Am I Creative?

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AM I CREATIVE?

By

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
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I. Thesis Summary

This thesis is an exploration of what it means to be creative and what it takes to start new creative projects. The overall goal of the project was to capture the process of taking on something new, and following it through to the end. I also want to show the audience the reward and gratification that can come from trying something new and completing it. My hope is that people will see my documentary and want to do something similar, inspiring them to go out and find the ways that they can live a creative life.

I chose to communicate my ideas through a documentary film. When I watch a film, it normally provides an extra layer of emotional impact that I don't often find in most written works. There has always been something very inspiring to me about watching someone do something rather than reading about it. Although the technical constraints of a documentary film may restrict the depth with which one can explore an idea, as opposed to writing a thesis paper, I think a film's imagery allows the audience member to experience the action alongside the artist and therefore connect more strongly to the successes and failures of the project.

The five new creative works that I documented in this thesis were: writing for a live sketch comedy show, creating a short film, starting a regular podcast, writing a song, and doing stand-up comedy. These five mediums are all very different from each other, and most importantly are things that I have wanted to do for a long time. I hoped what would make my project stand out is the passion that I have for all of the individual projects. I could have chosen more traditional types of projects like painting or learning

to play the piano, but if I had gone with ideas that were only chosen because more people might be interested in them, I would not have been able to make them appear very compelling and fulfilling in a film because they would not have had the same motivation.

Each of the projects created their own unique challenges and rewards. Creating a short film was the area that I had the most experience in before doing this thesis, so my expectations were the highest. It was also the most disappointing because I had a concrete measurement system. My film was entered into Campus Movie Fest, a traveling student film competition, and was not select to be screened as one of the top 16 films. This was the low point of the project and came very early on in the process. Writing for a sketch comedy show was unique in that I was collaborating with a team and wasn't responsible for the entire project. In this case, it was difficult to give up control of my ideas and allow others to be in charge of the execution, but it was also rewarding to see my script performed on a stage with the type of scale and production values that I never could have achieved on my own. Creating a podcast was the most relaxed of all of the projects. There weren't any hard deadlines or expectations to meet. It was a collaborative audio show made with two friends that we were ultimately satisfied with. It is also unique from the others because it's ongoing; we will continue to produce podcast episodes as long as we can. Writing music was the most difficult of the projects because I have so little training and experience. Although I thought I was bringing good ideas to the table, the process of turning them into actual music was frustrating because it required a lot more expertise than I had. Performing stand-up comedy was probably the most fulfilling of all of the projects because it is the most raw expression of my ideas.

With all the other areas, there is some layer of collaboration or editing that usually comes along with it, but with standup it was just me on stage, facing an audience. The immediacy of the feedback creates a sense of anxiety that I didn't feel in any of the other projects.

As I drew closer to completing these five creative projects, I had a sense of accomplishment that was greater than I could have expected. What felt great about completing this project was the personal connection I had to my efforts. Not that doing a research project or social justice project would come without gratification, but there is an extra level of satisfaction that comes from knowing that the work you have been putting months of your life into is an expression of your own ideas. The essence of what I hope people who watch my film take away, is that there is an invaluable feeling that comes with putting time and effort into something that is your own original creation.

II. Choosing this topic

The process

This was not the first idea that I had for a senior thesis project. My original thesis topic was also a documentary film, but one that took a much different direction. In the fall of 2014, I took a class on city building. In this class we visited and took a tour of Transitions Homeless Recovery Center. This experience was very powerful to me, and inspired me to want to make a documentary about homelessness in Columbia, SC. I started to gather momentum around the idea, and even conducted a preliminary interview with the mayor of Columbia, Steve Benjamin. But in the summer of 2015, I took a break from this project to return home and work for the summer. When I returned to school, I did not have the same passion for the project that I did when I began. As much as I would still love to make a film that addresses this topic, I could not seem to regain the momentum I had and did not want to do the issue a disservice by making something that I wasn't fully committed to.

So I began searching for a different thesis topic. My professional goals at the time had shifted towards entertainment and performing. So, I tried to think of a way to incorporate many of the things that I was interested in learning about in my last semester of college into one project. I came up with the idea for this documentary, where I would undertake five smaller projects that I had always wanted to follow through on and share with others what the process of starting a new creative endeavor is like.

Personal Connection

This project was inherently connected to me in a very personal way. Not only was I creating a documentary in which I would be forced to be in front of the camera instead of behind, but I was also going to be putting my own work out there for everyone to see, including areas that I had no idea whether or not I would succeed. This thesis was not only a way for me to create a film that I hoped would connect to people in an inspiring way, but would also give me the opportunity and motivation to follow through on many new experiences that I always wanted to accomplish by the end of college, but had continually put off.

Importance of creativity in everyday life

The point of this project is not to encourage every person who watches it to quit his job and become the next Mozart or da Vinci. That is unrealistic and would most likely not incite any enthusiasm in people. The kind of creativity I am interested in is the kind that is referred to as “little-c” creativity (Connor). “Big-C” creativity is the kind that creates masterpieces. The kind that can take years of training and expertise in order to be channeled into the intended goal. “Little-c” creativity, like knitting a scarf or making a new recipe, can be focused on in the moment. This type of creativity, or emphasis on making, is correlated with people having positive emotions and displaying positive personality traits in their daily life. People have their most creative days when they are energetic, happy, or relaxed (Connor).

In research, this difference in creativity is often referred to as the difference in artistic creativity and everyday creativity. In a study conducted by Zorana Ivcevic,

participants were asked to nominate acts that they thought were artistically creative and then again for everyday creativity (Ivcevic). The results were that people nominated acts that generally took more knowledge and time commitment to be artistically creative.

Examples of commonly nominated everyday creative activities are daydreaming, making a card, or taking photographs for fun (Ivcevic). While I understand the distinction that often needs to be made in psychological research, my project breaks down that division in people's minds. Part of the motivation of my project is to show that if someone who is a full time student with two jobs can find the time to do five projects in three months, anyone can find the time to try at least one new one. I think too often people create this association in their head that artistic creativity is something that you have to quit your job and devote your life to. While that works for some people, I have met plenty of biology, business, or engineering majors at school who get a lot of enjoyment out of painting or making short films on the weekends. While "everyday creativity" is also important, I wanted to show that "artistic creativity" can be worked into everyday life.

III. Production

On February 10th, 2015, the South Carolina Honors College awarded me a Senior Thesis Research Grant. That news came the same week that I was starting to work on my first of five projects. With April 22nd being the last possible due date for my film, I had less than three months to complete it. This accelerated timeline created an urgent and often hectic environment around the project that I actually think made for a more authentic experience and infused a little bit of extra motivation into the process.

Project 1: Short Film

My freshman year of college I worked on a film for a travelling student film competition called Campus Movie Fest (CMF). Some friends that lived in my dorm who had never made a movie before asked me to help them shoot and edit their idea. Since then I have worked on countless student films for the student television station (SGTV) and in my media arts courses. But all of those were either someone else's idea that I helped produce, or an original work of my own that came from a prompt provided by the professor. So when I returned to Campus Movie Fest in February, it was the first time I would be producing a short film of my own, from start to finish, for no reason other than my own volition.

The short film I made is called *Block* (Appendix A). It is about an incredibly successful young writer who, for the first time in his life, has writers block. He sees a counselor to try and discover the root of the issue, and reveals some family turmoil in his past. The film ends with his admission that he has since reconciled with his family, and that the root of his writer's block may be that he has everything he thought he ever

wanted, but now lacks direction and inspiration. It was an ambitious project, because it is a lot of characterization and story to fit into CMF's five minute limit. This, in my opinion, was the project's downfall.

The most significant rule for Campus Movie Fest is that the entire film must be shot and edited in one week. The largest hurdle for me was finding actors who were free at the same time to film the main dialogue scene. My counselor was played by a graduate theater student who was recommended to me by a professor. Although she was a perfect age and look for the role, she was going out of town the weekend of CMF and came with a limited number of shooting date possibilities. The search for my male lead was more extensive, with more possible options, but I needed to find someone who would be available at a very specific time. After failing to find anyone local who was free, I took a shot in the dark and messaged a few people I had acted with in high school. With a stroke of luck, one of them was free and able to make the drive to Columbia at 10 AM on a Friday to save the production.

On the day of the shoot, I was up before the sun to transform my room into something that could pass as a counselor's office. With about a two hour window to shoot 80 percent of the film, everything had to be prepared so that we could start immediately when both actors arrived. At the first moment the camera began to roll and the actors did their first take together live, I knew they would deliver a performance I would be satisfied with. That left the pressure on me to make sure all the elements around them ran smoothly enough to get through all of the shots, with only one other crew member to help me. We miraculously got through everything that we needed in the

time we had, but with one major problem: it was too long. For a film that had a hard five minute time limit, the takes of the dialogue scene were lasting six and half minutes.

Without the luxury of time, there was nothing I could do to rewrite the script on the fly. I just had to hope I could trim enough in editing to leave my story intact and also allow for the other scenes in the film that I had planned.

After several long days and nights of cutting and re-cutting, I finally ended up on a version of the film that I was happy with. After turning the film in on Monday, I arrived at the screening on Thursday night with the hope that my film would be chosen as one of the top 16 submissions to be shown. I was confident after a few of the early films were screened, thinking that my movie was at least on par, if not significantly better than some of them. But as time went by, and the night neared a close, it became clear that my film was not going to be one of the 16 chosen this year. With some of the issues that I recognized with the final product, I did not have high expectations of having the best film or receiving one of the judges' awards. But to put all of the energy that I did into this project, it was one of the most disappointing nights I had in a long time. The worst part was that this was supposed to be one area of this thesis that I was experienced in, and it gave me very little confidence that I would find success with any of the other endeavors.

Project 2: Writing for a sketch comedy show

Carolina Tonight was an opportunity that fell in my lap a few weeks before I started making this documentary. The show is a live broadcast, sketch comedy show, modeled much in the style of *Saturday Night Live*. The show was created by Ryan Brower and Samuel Gossett, two members of SGTV. Being the former Station Manager

of SGTV, I heard about the idea and was immediately interested in being involved. I had previously considered auditioning for an improv comedy group as part of my thesis, but I felt this would be a more unique experience and would allow me to be involved in the show's inauguration, which fit well with the theme of the entire project.

After the second meeting of the show, Ryan and Sam asked me to be the head writer. This meant that I would be in charge of leading pitch meetings, giving notes to other writers, and making rewrites for the final show. One of the reasons I was intrigued by the chance to work on a show like this is because it would give me the opportunity to collaborate with others. The job as head writer gave me the opportunity to do this in a variety of ways, and introduced me to one of the most creatively stimulating environments I have experienced: a comedy writer's room. The energy in a room full of people who are trying to channel their funniest ideas is contagious. It's amazing to witness the birth of an idea, and then watch it bounce around the room as other writers find ways to improve upon it, all the way through the rehearsal process where the producers and cast add to it until it plays out on stage, at which point it has taken a life entirely different from the original idea.

Preparing for the first show was a very intense process. Because the writing staff was very inexperienced, I ended up writing two of the four live sketches (Appendix B and C), and revised and wrote half of the lines for the other two. After all of the writing work, we rehearsed every night for a week, figuring out blocking, camera positions, cuts, lighting, sound, and scene transitions all as we went. But all of that work paid off as the first show went off almost perfectly, to a sold out crowd that laughed and enjoyed the

show thoroughly. After learning a lot from the first show, our writers started improving the quality of their scripts, and I didn't have to focus as much on writing all of the scripts, but instead on revising already strong ideas that were submitted. The live audience portion of the second show went off perfectly, but everyone was a little disappointed because the online broadcast crashed several times and much of the show was lost. But after accumulating a range of failures and successes, I am confident that the third and final show of the season on April 23rd will be the best one so far.

Project 3: Podcast

A creative medium that I have grown to love over the past few years, is podcasting. Podcasts are recorded audio conversations (occasionally with accompanying video) that usually play out like a talk radio show that may or may not ever be broadcast live. I love listening to people I find interesting talk about things that I am interested in. So much so that podcasts have somewhat replaced music as the thing I listen to most often when I am in my car, doing dishes, or at the gym. My own podcast is something that I wanted to do for quite some time now. So when my roommate, Austin, approached me about doing a podcast a month or so before I began the thesis project, I thought it would be a perfect fit.

With that little bit of impetus, I came up with the idea for *Curate the Internet*. Featuring my roommates Austin, Sanchit, and I, we explore the internet each week and bring together the most interesting topics we can find. Topics have ranged from newsworthy headlines like Apple vs the FBI and Tay the Twitterbot, to fun ones like Ted Cruz conspiracy theories and Papaw's amazing cookout. It is a concept and framework

that gives us some sort of direction before we sit down at the microphones, but also allows us the freedom to fit in the topics we want.

The actual production of the show has been a lot more difficult than I anticipated. Not only does it take a two hour recording process including set up and break down, but also about two to five hours of editing depending on how many technical problems we have. To begin, we created a website, cover art, and hosting solution, which we are still trying to get fully worked out. But despite the regular work, this was one of the most satisfying of the projects. It was very rewarding to be able to sit down with a few of my good friends, discuss things that interest me, and be able to walk away with a final product that I am proud of and will continue to work on and promote in the future.

Project 4: Music

Writing music was definitely the most challenging of all of the projects that I have attempted. My overall lack of training and experience in the world of music was very apparent the first time I sat down to work on the song. Music has its own theory, language, and set of practices, all of which I knew very little about. I wouldn't say there was an arrogance or naiveté, because I did anticipate that there were plenty of things I didn't know about writing music that would get in my way. The problem was, I didn't know what I didn't know. With a podcast there were certain technical aspects I didn't know how to do at first, but I at least knew what they were and how to go about learning them. Music is such a broad thing to try and understand that I sort of had to walk in blind.

With all that being said, I certainly wouldn't call it a complete disaster. The song I wanted to write is a rap song called "Anxious." My main reason for this is that I am not confident at all in my ability to sing or play an instrument, and rap music is something that I love when it is made to be unique and interesting. I was also hoping that rap music would allow my ability to use words to overcome my musical deficiencies.

The process was much more difficult than I had anticipated. It was hard for Austin and me to communicate to each other in musical terms because our experience levels were so different. The song I originally wrote had to be adjusted and changed throughout the process to fit in with the beat that the both of us had decided on. The chorus was also difficult to create together because we had such different ideas on it at the start. After a few different sessions and a few hours recording, though, we had finally completed the song. The song was certainly not what I expected it to be, but I was still very satisfied with the final product.

Project 5: Stand-up comedy

Stand-up has always been a hidden passion for me. I have been watching stand-up specials on TV for as long as I can remember, probably long before I understood half of the jokes. As well as being an admirer, I also have been interested in doing stand-up myself for quite some time. I have had old notebooks lying around with scratched out joke ideas and rewritten stories for the past few years. But it has been one of those things that has always seemed just out of my reach, and I have never had the courage to try it. The hope for this part of the film was that stand-up would not only be a new creative project to conquer, but also a hurdle of personal follow through.

My first choice of venue for stand-up was a Carolina Production open mic. They provide the on campus entertainment at the University of South Carolina, and that would guarantee a room full of my peers that would not be too intimidating. The open mic that I prepared for in March was cancelled because not enough people were interested. The next option that I could find was a weekly open mic at New Brookland Tavern, a small bar in West Columbia. This open mic is run by a group of comedians in Columbia and is populated by a mix of newcomers and experienced comics. This made the experience all the more stressful because I knew people who came up before and after me would be more comfortable and would probably perform much better in comparison. But my overall goal for the experience was just to not perform so terribly that I never wanted to do it again.

After debating over some different material I had written, the content of the set that I ultimately went with was just to tell a couple of funny stories that happened to me with a few jokes mixed in. I think this ultimately was a good decision, because it allowed me to flow through the set without getting too hung up on any particular joke that didn't land. The moments leading up to walking on stage were some of the most stressful I have ever had. Stand-up leaves you so vulnerable because it is such a raw form of expression. There is nothing to shield you from the audience. All of the other projects incorporated some sort of collaboration or editing that kept me from being face to face with the people judging my work. Even the CMF screening was a silent and more personal screening. But failing on stage alone, there is nowhere to hide and no attempting to spin it like you're doing well. The people who are deciding whether or not you succeed, are also the

ones watching you while you do it, so there are no two ways about it. But luckily, I did not endure a tremendous failure. I received some good laughs during a few parts of my set, struggled through a few parts, and ultimately walked away with enough dignity that I hope to attempt to do it again very soon.

The Documentary Production Process

Completing these five unique projects in such a short amount of time was actually not the most difficult part. The most difficult part was making a film out of it. With the Honors College grant, I purchased a Canon T6i, a Zoom H1 recorder, a Rode Videomic, a tripod, and a shoulder mount for the camera. These were the basic essentials that I felt I needed in order to make the film. Obviously if I had a larger budget available to me, I could have purchased better equipment and raised the overall production value of the film. But my attitude towards this project was not that it was going to be a technical filmmaking masterpiece. I did not feel that was necessary to convey the message of the film. On the contrary, I think it might have actually served the purposes of the film better to use more of a guerilla filmmaking style, because it accentuated the personal nature of the film. Sometimes a camera set up on a tripod in the middle of the room while you press record yourself is the best way to capture the emotion of a particular moment.

As far as my crew, Marisa Bank, a senior business and media arts student, helped me tremendously throughout the process. But without a full time crew to follow me into these projects, it was difficult to capture all the moments effectively. I was often wearing two hats, one in front of the camera trying to be in the moment and be creative, and the other concerned with what is behind the camera, removing me from the moment.

Another factor that I did not consider was how uncomfortable it can be to make a documentary about yourself. I have never been someone who is particularly shy in front of a camera. But it is not very often that I am forced to sit in front of the camera and talk about myself, my work, and my own vulnerabilities. Filming in public was also something that I underestimated. Because I was pointing the camera at myself, I felt all the more self-conscious about filming in public and feeling the eyes of everyone around on top of me.

The accelerated timeline and scheduling setbacks also contributed to the overall stress of the production process. The post production process has been a strenuous one as well. Editing myself is always more difficult because the perspective on what is interesting and what is too long or boring is often skewed, sometimes to the overly positive and sometimes to the overly negative. Although it has come with its added stress, there was something cathartic about reflecting on the way I carry myself in front of the camera, as well as the way I put together a documentary and a story. I am not against the idea of producing documentaries told from my perspective in the future, because it is actually a very fun and honest way to approach storytelling. But I think I would need considerably more time and resources to make something in this style.

IV. Conclusion

At the end of this process, my first response is one of exhaustion. I have put everything that I have into this project creatively, emotionally, and physically. When I look back at my thesis as a whole, I feel that there is a lot to be proud of. I accomplished a lot in terms of the number and depth of creative endeavors that I attempted and followed through on. There is a sense of achievement that comes with walking into a completely new project and finding success quickly. But I think I can say that I am more proud of the failures that I had in this project. I feel comfortable admitting at this point that I am a person who is afraid of failure. When the very first portion of the project did not go at all as well as I had hoped, part of me wanted give up on this project. When I was juggling three or four of these creative ventures at a time, I thought about scaling it back. But even in my most vulnerable state, screwing up a joke on stage in front of a live audience, I didn't crumble under minor failures. That is where I have found the most pride and personal growth from this thesis. I took on five things that I have wanted to do for years and followed through on every one of them. I am no longer concerned with how successful each one was in the moment. I feel like I have accomplished something bigger than that.

But obviously if I am producing a documentary film that I hope to show the world, this project is not just for me. The result that I want more than any other for this film is for at least one person to watch it and be inspired to go out and try something new. The idea of creativity being worked into everyday life has not been lost on me throughout this process. Particularly in the last month, I have spent just about every day

working on some element of this thesis. Each day, the momentum of what I accomplish gets carried into the next. Success begets success, and that creates creative inertia, but something has to give a person that first push. That's what this project has done for me. Hopefully it will do the same for others.

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Appendix A: *Block* Script

Block

Written By

Michael Duggan

INT. - DAY

Fades in to slow motion shots of James and his family getting into a fight. They are yelling at each other and throwing things. James storms out as his sister tries to stop him. Title screen fades in. Under it we hear:

COUNSELOR:

James... James.... James!

He snaps to attention.

COUNSELOR:

You were going to tell me why you are here?

JAMES

Have you ever written a book?

COUNSELOR:

What?

JAMES

I mean, you are a doctor so I'm sure you've written papers, but have you ever published a book?

COUNSELOR:

No I haven't.

JAMES

Well I've written 4 bestsellers. I'm 23.

COUNSELOR:

Yes, I know who you are.

JAMES

Then you also know that there is no possible way for you understand what my life is like. Pulitzer Prize finalist, Time Magazine cover story, two National Book Awards, Oprah Book club sticker. Do I need to keep going?

COUNSELOR:

Please do.

JAMES

My books have sold close to 30 million copies, including a lot of young people. I have to carry the

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D) weight of millions of lives being affected by the stories I decide to write. There are only a handful of people in the world who could have the slightest idea of understanding what its like to be me. (Pause) So to answer your question: No, I don't really know why I'm here.

COUNSELOR: I don't know have any idea what it's like to be you. I don't know what it's like to be on a magazine. And I don't know that I'll ever write a book that millions of people read. But I do know a bit about helping my patients. And I know that people don't make appointments with me for no reason. So you can keep playing the role of the child prodigy who is smarter than everyone that tries to help, and you probably are. But there's no school obligation, no court order. You can choose to let me help or not, but either way, you don't have to be here.

JAMES

Well I do sort of have a problem.

COUNSELOR: See that's not too hard, why don't you tell me about it.

JAMES

I haven't really been able to get anything going recently...

COUNSELOR: Oh, that happens to every guy at some point. Though it's a bit odd for someone your age...

JAMES

Writer's block. I've been having writers block.

COUNSELOR: Ohhh, okay. What is your writing process normally like?

JAMES

For as long as I can remember, I have been able to just sit down and let ideas come out on the page. They're not always great on the first go, but this is the first time I haven't been able to at least get something on the page.

COUNSELOR: Have you had any relationship conflicts lately? Stress in your personal life? Any recent family problems?

JAMES

How much time do you have?

COUNSELOR: Well let's start there. What is your relationship with your family like?

JAMES

I stopped talking to my family when I was 18 years old.

COUNSELOR: How did that happen?

JAMES We didn't agree on the way my career should go. My family wanted me to stay in school, take it slow and pace myself. I just wanted to write all the time because of all the recognition. I thought if I didn't move fast enough, the world would move on and forget about me. So when I turned 18, I just left.

COUNSELOR: Do you feel any guilt about that?

JAMES Only because of my sister. She is the one who always tried reaching out to me.

COUNSELOR: Did you ever talk to her?

JAMES (flashback starts) Yeah, when I sat down with her I tried to make her understand that our parents were trying to ruin my career before it started.

NATALIE They aren't trying to ruin your career. They are trying to keep you from burning yourself out.

JAMES She didn't understand that if I stopped putting out books, I would be disappointing all my of readers.

NATALIE You don't owe those people anything. You belong at home with your family.

JAMES

And then I did something stupid. I said that being with my family isn't going to get me anywhere in life.

(Breaks away from flashback back to a close-up of James)

I really shouldn't have said that. (Back to the flashback shot of Natalie) She said, if that's the way that you feel, then we will stop trying to ruin your life. And she left.

COUNSELOR: Wow. I'm sorry to hear all that. I really think you need to go see them. I know swallowing your pride after 5 years must feel very difficult, but clearly this conflict and the guilt you're carrying is causing you're writing to suffer. You all clearly have a lot of problems that you need to work out.

JAMES

Unfortunately, that's not the real (MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D) problem.

COUNSELOR: Then what is?

JAMES

I reconnected with my family 4 months ago. On my 23rd birthday, I figured it had been long enough, so

I did everything you just said. Went to their house and worked out a lot of the frustration and anger that had built up over the years. Our relationship couldn't be better.

They look at each other silently for a moment.

JAMES

4 months I've gone without a single story idea. (Pause) Family, career. I have everything I thought I ever wanted, and yet I don't know what I'm supposed to do now.

The counselor looks at him, not knowing what to say. James goes home sits at his desk and looks at the blank page on his screen.

THE END.

Appendix B: Carolina Tonight Script Example 1

SCENE 1

Four employees are sitting around a conference room table, Bert Cunningham is standing at the head of the table with a whiteboard behind him.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Alright everyone, lets get started. As you know here at Technology Enterprises we are always looking toward the future. And the future, is Apps. Need directions? There's an app for that. Want to order a pizza? There's an app for that. Want to rate the cleanliness of public toilets with your friends? There's an app for that.

WATLEY

We're going to be ranking public toilets?

MR. CUNNINGHAM

It's called Flush Watley, and its just an example! Now, we are going to need a wide variety of apps if this business is going to work, so what have you all got for me?

Silence across the room as everyone looks around.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Alright, I'll start us off. Social Networking App. Name? Mumblr. It matches up people in your area who have trouble speaking loud enough at parties. You record a voice message with your phone really close to your face, and then it amplifies the volume 20 times, and sends it to the other person. (Jensen Raises his hand) Jenkins, go ahead.

JENSEN

Its uh.. Jensen sir. If its for people who don't talk loud enough, wouldn't it make more sense for them to text each other.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Johnson! Then how are they going to get over their mumbling. That's the key. It's part social network,

part self help. You're appealing to the teenagers, and the house wives.

WATLEY

Great point sir.

JENSEN

I mean, that seems a little inappropriate- Thank you Watley, Alright! Mumblr. you guys are 14 year old chinese gymnasts, and that's your springboard. Who's got something for me. Good, Anderson.

ANDERSON

So going off of that, social networking app. Name? Loanr. It takes people who don't really have anyone in their life, and tries to pair them up with someone else. (Everyone looks around and nods in agreement). It does this by matching people who have the same amount of student loan debt.

JENSEN

Why would you match people based on student loan debt...?

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Because you don't want to match successful people with a bunch of losers.

JENSEN

So you wouldn't want to match someone, who say, had their parents pay for 6 years of college and then gave them a bunch of money to start a company, with some loser who had to work their way through school?

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Precisely. Now your starting to get it Jefferson. Alright, lets make like lumberjacks and keep this log rolling. Nielson, whatcha got?

NIELSON

So, everyone uses binders right? (gestures with 3 ring binder in front of him)

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Go on, I'm with you so far.

NIELSON

We call it? Bindr.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Oh, thats good (writes it on the board).

NIELSON

3 ring binders are easily the best way to organize papers. But no one has invented a way, to organize your binders. So this app lets you take pictures of each binder, and then write notes about what's inside each one.

Fantastic idea Nielson!

JENSEN

Couldn't you just write on it with a sharpie?

NIELSON

Because a sharpie... is not an app! (holds up a sharpie and his phone while doing this)

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Well since apparently Steve, soon to be Job-less, over here doesn't think thats good enough, do you have anything else Nielson?

NIELSON uhh, yeah. Its called Alzheimr. It takes all of the stress and complication out of putting your grandparents in a home.

JENSON

Okay, now that one is just offensive to the elderly.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

(Sternly) Johansson, you're being a real Debbie Drowner right now.

JENSEN

Don't you mean Debbie Downer?

MR. CUNNINGHAM

No because you are drowning all of our ideas right now. What makes you some golly G-damn expert on making apps.

JENSEN

First of all, I am the only one here who knows how to write code. Second of all, you guys are just ripping off tumblr and grindr, by taking words that end in E-R, taking out the E, and making it an app!

Groans from the other workers

MR. CUNNINGHAM

You know what, he's right, although these are top notch ideas, we need to diversify. Watley give me something with a completely original name.

WATLEY

Sure... its called: Go Find Me. I like to think of it as crowd sourced hide n seek. You find a hiding place, then it sends your GPS location out to strangers and they come find you.

That, is... incredible.

Everyone gives other words of praise.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Poke a hole in that idea, Jonesy.

JENSEN

Well... that's a pretty blatant rip off of Go Fund Me, and also... you're basically asking to be charged with accessory to murder, like beyond a reasonable doubt.

Everyone starts screaming at him. Examples:

Nielson is just looking at him opening and closing his binder.

ANDERSON

Not everyone is poor like you!

WATLEY

You just know you would never find me!

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Alright, alright. If Johnny HTML over here thinks he knows how to make apps, let's see what his big idea is.

JENSEN

Okay, it's called Startup. People can go on and post their skills and ideas to help find partners for new start up business. I already made a mock up (pulls out phone) it has a place to post portfolios and you can video conference with potential partners so that you can talk face to face before giving out personal information.

Silence.

Everyone erupts again, yelling at Jensen.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

You think people want to use apps to make their life better? They want apps to waste away their unhappy lives and find others to be miserable with!

Everyone vocally agrees with him

WATLEY

(without really being acknowledged) I hate myself!

MR. CUNNINGHAM

Now, Jimenez, if you would like to buckle on down and be serious for a moment, we can come up with a real idea.

Jensen pauses for a moment, stands up, and walks directly off stage.

MR. CUNNINGHAM

(As the camera starts fading or zooming out) Alright, next idea, google naps. A map that shows you the best places to sleep in public.

Blackout

End of Scene

Appendix C: Carolina Tonight Script Example 2

SCENE 1

JOHN

Hello everyone, welcome to the first episode of Carolina Tonight. We are Student Gamecock Television's first ever live sketch comedy show. We have a really great show for you lined up, our musical guest tonight is overnight internet sensation, Nathan Leach. But like I said, this is our first attempt at a live sketch show, and we don't want to push the boundaries too far on our first night. People can be very sensitive on the internet and we don't want to trigger any crazy reactions, so I thought I would start out tonight with some pretty harmless jokes, make sure no one gets offended. So lets see

Someone Stands up in the crowd.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1

Uh, excuse me.

JOHN

Oh, yes, do you have something to say?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1

Yes, I actually work at Sudexo, the company who manages all the dining here. It makes me really disappointed, when in 2016, I hear people complaining about the lines at Chick-fil-a. Have you ever fried five thousand nuggets in one day?

JOHN

No. I can honestly say I haven't.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1

Well, it takes a long time. You want four tenders, not three? Fine, let me get you one with no pickles! I know you did not just come in here at lunch time and ask for a grilled chicken sandwich!!

JOHN

Wow, alright then. I didn't know you felt so passionately about that. I will stay away from any jokes about food service from now on.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1

Thank you.

JOHN

Okay then, let me go with a classic. Knock knock.

AUDIENCE Who's

there?

JOHN

Europe

AUDIENCE Europe

who?

JOHN

(Playfully) European!

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2

Alright, that's just about enough of that.

JOHN

Um, did you also have a problem with one of my jokes?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2

Yes, I actually am, European. It just makes me really disappointed, that its 2016, and people are still making all of the jokes, claiming that people from Europe just sit around and go pee all the time.

JOHN

I mean, that's not really what the joke is about-

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2

Europe has really problems ya know! Have you taken a look at the Greek economy? How about all the Syrain refugees in Hungary and Turkey? You think everyone in Ukraine was just sittin around pissing themselves when Putin came a knock knockin!

JOHN

Okay, I'm sorry! I know that people in Europe don't just sit around peeing all the time. I will leave them out of all of my jokes from now on. This is the most classic prank call joke, everyone knows it. (Pause) Is

your refrigerator running? Well you better go catch it!

AUDIENCE MEMBER 3

(Stands up) My father was crushed, and died, from a runaway refrigerator. (Sits down)

JOHN

Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that, uh, Rest in Peace. Let me just do one that no has no people in it, make sure no one gets offended. Why don't they play poker in the Jungle?(Pause) Too many cheetahs!

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4

Oh you have go to be kidding me!

JOHN

Okay come on! How can you have a problem with a joke about cheetah's?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4

I am the president of this school's chapter of PET-Kuh. People for the Ethical Treatment of Cheetahs.

JOHN

That's not even a real thing.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4

Oh it's real. And we have sat back for too long, and endured people like *YOU*, dragging their name through the mud. Do you know how you spell cheetah? With two E's! And they are the furthest thing from untrustworthy. I have enjoyed many a game of Scategories with my cheetah friends. Never a single issue! I play with my sister? She tries to count Zuichini as a fruit!

JOHN

What does that have to do with-

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4

It just makes me really disappointed, that in 2016, we cannot all be tolerant of how we paint an entire group of people.

JOHN

Cheetah's aren't people-

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4

Do even know where Cheetah's live? I will tell you one thing, it's not in the jungle. They live mostly in savannas and grassy plains!!!

JOHN

Okay, okay! Man, classic black guy, always talking in the theater, am I right? (No one stands up) Really? No one is going to get upset over that one?

Cuts back to a shot of Audience member 4.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 4

Nah I'm good.

JOHN

(Shrugs) We have a great show for you tonight. Nathan Leach and more right after this, don't go anywhere!

Blackout