

# TELL YOUR STORY

with Pauline Findlay

Create your story  
and share it with  
the world.



## ABOUT Pauline Findlay



Pauline Findlay is a filmmaker, author and online educator. She has 20 years' experience in theatre, film, television and documentary in Australia and the UK. She is a graduate of the Australia Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) in Sydney Australia and the Academy Drama School in London.

Pauline's short films have screened at prestigious Academy (Oscar) accredited film festivals around the world. Her short film Blue Mist was chosen out of 6,000 short films to be one of 24 international films to screen at Short Shorts in Tokyo.

Pauline has twice been nominated by the Australian Writers' Guild for the Monte Miller Award. Her script 'Lola' became a Quarterfinalist of the Nicholl Fellowships by The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Oscars).

In 2017, Pauline published her first YA novel 'Can You Feel it?' which is based on 'Lola'. She is currently working on her second novel in the series 'Can You See It?'

[paulinefindlay.com](http://paulinefindlay.com)

## STORY ROCK STAR

Pauline is an award-winning businesswoman and the founder of Story Rock Star, a storytelling start-up that helps companies, students and individuals tell their story.

Pauline has won the Gold Stevie Award for 'Solo Entrepreneur of the Year' 2019 in New York City.

In 2020 she won the Silver Stevie Award for International Business in Paris for 'Start-Up of the Year' and Bronze Stevie Award for Women in Business for 'Start-Up of the Year' in Las Vegas.

She was awarded these Stevies for her work serving the hearing loss and education sector through storytelling and filmmaking.

Pauline teaches filmmaking to deaf and hard of hearing teenagers across Australia for 'Hear for You'.

For more details on Pauline go to her LinkedIn profile: <https://bit.ly/3puWG0t>



## GET READY TO CREATE!

### Message from Pauline

## LESSON CONTENT

### Tell your story

#### LESSON ONE storytelling

#### LESSON TWO story elements

#### LESSON THREE heads of departments

#### LESSON FOUR shooting your film

#### LESSON FIVE post production

#### LESSON SIX screening festivals

Hello Story Rock Stars,

Welcome to the virtual '**Filmmaking**' course for '**Hear for You**'.

This course is created to be **independent learning** in your own time, with the support of weekly **Zoom classroom** sessions.

The **course content** will be released at the beginning of the week, in **video format**. You will have access to the content for the duration of the course, so you can go back over it at your convenience.

The **Zoom** classrooms are a great place to ask questions, **meet your peers** and **share your ideas**. Please turn up promptly to these sessions.

I have created a **Padlet** wall which I will add information to weekly. It will have gear tips, festival information, and much more.

All you need is a **phone**, **computer**, and a **passion** to tell a great story!

May the story force be with you!

*Pauline*

# THIS PACK

## Lessons and FunWork

I created this **Fun Pack** to consolidate the information from each lesson in one place. Some sections have too much information to condense into one page. I will give you tips for those sections.

Go **back** to your **video lessons** at any stage. I'll be right there to guide you.

The **FunWork** is supposed to be just that... **FUN!** The FunWork is to help you digest the content and start to develop your script ideas.

Our **Zoom** classroom and **Padlet** wall are **safe places** to ask questions.

We aim to create a **positive** and **supportive** learning experience. Online bullying is taken very seriously. We are here to uplift each other and grow together.

If at any time you need access to **mental health support**, please go to the '**Hear for You**' website and lick on the [Community Help and Support Page](https://hearforyou.com.au/what-we-do/community-support/)

**DIRECT LINK:** <https://hearforyou.com.au/what-we-do/community-support/>

Please call out any unacceptable behaviour if you see it... by standing isn't cool. Let's set the example we want to see and have LOADS OF FUN!

NB: When I say film I mean all kinds of visual storytelling... documentary, animation, web-series, TV, feature films, etc.

*Pauline*

Your FunWork  
will be in this box!

### My promise to you...

- I'll keep your homework brief, useful and fun. I even called it **FunWork!**
- I'll do my very best to answer your questions promptly.
- I will be **present** and **cheerful** for all our lessons. :)
- All **video lessons** in the course will be **captioned!**

### Your commitment to me...

- Please turn up to our **Zoom Classrooms** on time and have your **videos on**. I love to see your shiny faces.
- Please commit to **finishing** your **films**. There really is nothing better than finishing something!
- Come ready to **learn** with an **open heart**.



## L1: STORYTELLING

- What is a story?
- Who is the protagonist?
- Who is the antagonist?
- What is the story setup?
- What can Ads teach us?

**Story** is the most important part of filmmaking: without a great story, you will just have a bunch of cool shots. An **audience engages** with **emotional stories**, that are **heartfelt**.

The hero / **protagonist** is the main character that drives the story. They are often faced with danger, obstacles and challenges they must overcome for the story to conclude.

The **antagonist** is a character that opposes the protagonist and adds drama to your story / film. Without an antagonist your film can seem dull. The antagonist can also be an internal challenge, like being deaf. This still adds interest for the audience and gives them empathy for the hero. The hero still has to overcome the internal challenge, to complete their story journey.

The '**set-up**' is the **engine** of your **story**. Without a great, interesting, engaging set-up the audience won't be interested in your story. The story set-up tells us clearly about the characters and where the story is set. It will often raise one big question that needs to be answered by the end of the story.

Ads are everywhere. The best Ads grab our attention in seconds and make us feel something.

When creating your short film think about what you want to share. Your story should have a compelling hero, an interesting story set-up and use all the tools in your filmmaking toolbox, which you will learn through this workshop over the coming weeks.

## FunWork...

- **Watch your favourite** TV show, film, documentary, video game, web-series or short film on YouTube.
- Ask yourself what is keeping you engaged?
- Write three reasons for staying tuned in.
- Who is the **Antagonist** and **Protagonist**? Do they have the same goal?
- What is the **setup** of the story?
- Is there a big question that needs to be answered?

## Now start to daydream on your story idea...

- Who is your main character?
- What do they want to achieve by the end of your story?
- Use the Mind Map exercise if you need help to stimulate your imagination.



## DOCUMENTARY STORY

- Who is your subject?
- Is it about a person or an idea?
- How can you create a movement?

**Documentaries** have the power to change the world. In a documentary the person or the subject becomes the central heartbeat of your story.

**Raise** a **question** that you are going to **answer** by the **end** of the **documentary**. This will keep your **audience engaged**.

You can ask your audience to come along on the journey. They can help raise awareness after they have seen the documentary. Create a place where they can share your idea easily and help send the message out to the world through social media.

**Documentaries** are great at bringing people together and **creating** a **movement**. The power of documentary is weaving fact and emotion into the storytelling.

Most **documentarians** have a **strong sense** of the **story** they want to tell. Sometimes they are drawn to the subject because it's personal to them. Other times it can be something they are angry about and believe they can **show** better than **tell** people. Documentaries use the power of interviews and overlays (visual images) to put their point across.

Documentaries are also a lot **cheaper** and more **achievable** for small teams or even one person to **create**. If you have a phone or a camera you can create a documentary.

**Documentaries** are also **visually forgiven** if the **story** is **compelling**. Don't think this means you don't have to use professional sound. **Be brave** - go make a compelling documentary that will make people think! **I dare you!!!**

### Now start to daydream on your documentary idea...

- Who is your main character or what is the subject idea?
- What do you want from the audience by the end of your documentary? To create a movement? Or raise awareness in the topic?
- Use the **Mind Map** exercise if you need help to stimulate your imagination on the **bigger** documentary **picture**.



# STORYTELLING - FUN WORK!

**WHO IS YOUR MAIN CHARACTER? PROTAGONIST / HERO**

**WHAT DO THEY WANT TO ACHIEVE BY THE END OF YOUR STORY?**

**WHAT IS YOUR STORY SET UP?**

**MIND MAP BULLET POINT IDEAS**

# DOCUMENTARY - FUN WORK!

**WHAT IS YOUR DOCUMENTARY ABOUT? PERSON OR A SUBJECT**

**WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE BY THE END OF YOUR DOCUMENTARY?**

**WHAT IS THE CENTRAL STORY IDEA?**

**MIND MAP BULLET POINT IDEAS**

### What is the narrative/plot?

This is how the story unfolds. What is happening to your character? Who do they meet on their journey? What are the obstacles they must overcome? This information informs your script.

### What is the story world?

The story world is the place that your story is set. Chose an interesting story world to add big production values. Examples: Beach, Blue Mountains, Graveyard. For your short film you will need to be realistic on what is achievable within your location and follow all safety and government guidelines. Don't break any laws to make your films!

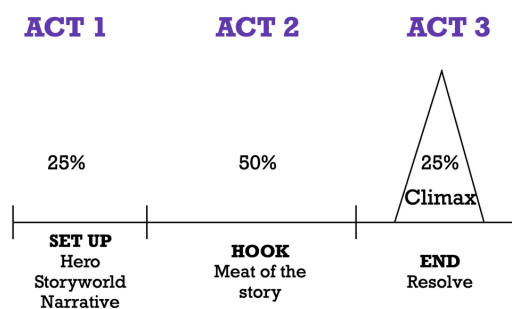
### What is the theme of your film?

Theme refers to the main idea or moral of your story. So what are you trying to convey with your story? For example, is it a love story? What do you want people to take away from your film / story?

### Who is the audience of your film?

It's important to think about who your audience is. Is it people the same age as you? We want to make work that is seen and changes the world so think of your audience early.

**All of this applies to documentary.**

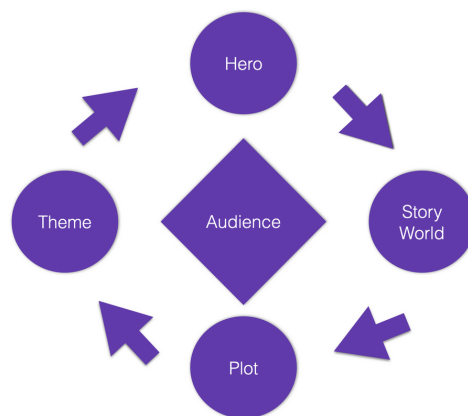


### Why use a three-act structure?

The three-act structure is centuries old. It works because it anchors your story with a purpose. I like to break my three acts into percentage sections. Act One 25% is the set-up. Act Two 50% is the meat of your story. Act Three 25% is where the climax happens and you resolve your story for the audience.

## L2: STORY ELEMENTS

- **plot / narrative**
- **storyworld**
- **theme**
- **audience**
- **three act structure**



## FunWork...

- Watch the John Lewis **Christmas Ads** links. Think about why they move you or make you laugh.
- Watch the short films **Heartbeat** and the Oscar nominated short film **Oktapodi**. Think about how they used all the story elements.
- Start to add more **story elements** to your idea. You should now be able to outline your three acts, know your hero, plot and story-world.



# STORY ELEMENTS - FUN WORK!

**BULLET POINT THE PLOT OF YOUR STORY / DOCUMENTARY**

**WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE? IF IT'S A DOCUMENTARY WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM THEM?**

**STORY WORLD - WHERE IS YOUR STORY SET?**

**WHAT THEMES ARE EXPLORED IN YOUR STORY?**

**WHO IS YOUR HERO OR SUBJECT?**

**INTERESTING FACTS ON YOUR HERO OR SUBJECT?**

## L3: HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

Producer  
Director  
1st AD  
Production Manager  
Cinematographer  
Soundie  
Editor  
Sound Designer  
Costume Designer  
Hair and Makeup  
Composer  
Digital Colourist

All **Heads of Department** have important jobs to help bring the Director's vision to life. They also have to manage their own teams through the production process.

Your job as a director is to encourage your team to be their most creative. The best directors make their teams feel valued.

I believe strongly in **collaboration** and that means listening to the input of others. You don't have to say yes to every idea presented, but it's a good idea to listen. Someone else's idea could elevate your story beyond your wildest dreams. Also, remember your manners. I know I'm old school on this, but **thank you** and **please** go a long way when people are working very hard and very long hours to bring your idea into the world.

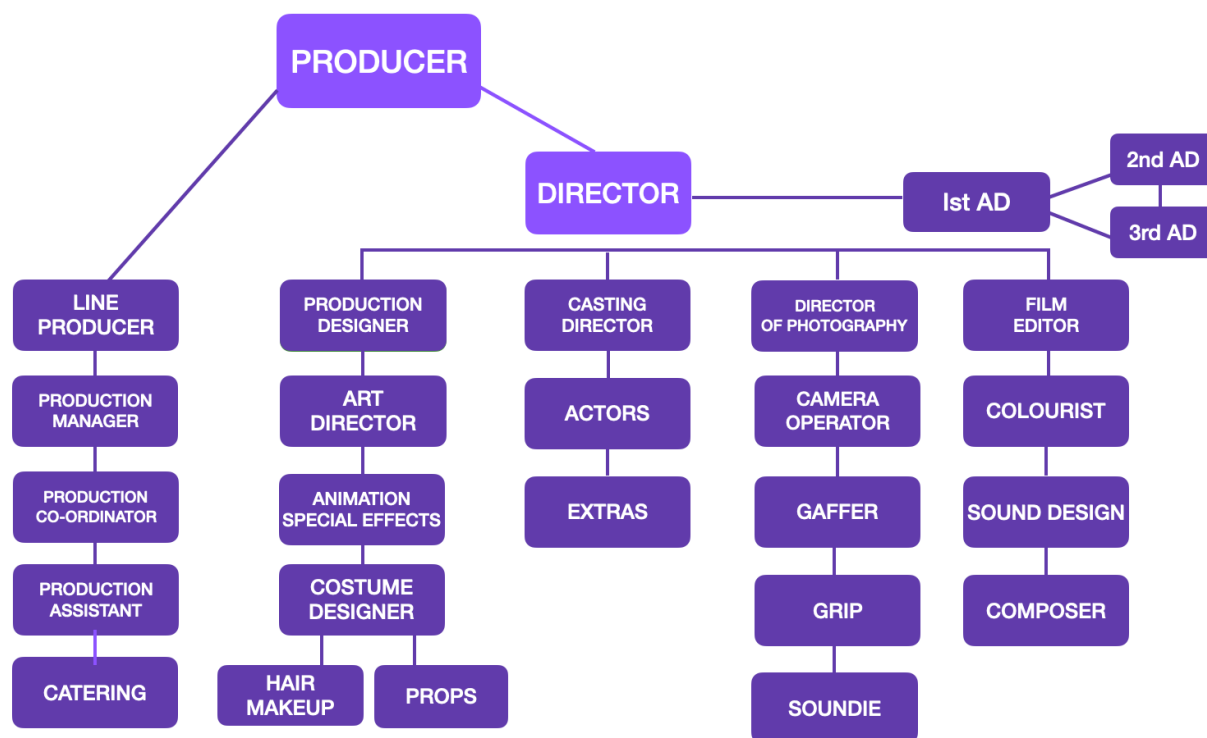
Go look at the **Production Organisation Chart** in the **Extras** section to understand how all the departments connect.

### FunWork...

- I've provided lots of links for different Heads of Departments in the Extra Section. Go look at them to understand better what these creatives do on films.
- It's **script time!** You should now have enough information to start to write your script.
- Go check out the White Board recap video on **Three Acts** in the Extras section.
- Now start to write your idea into script form. Be really specific about your character and locations, as this will make your story richer for your audience.



# PRODUCTION ORGANISATIONAL CHART



\*\*\* DOP - Director of Photography / Cinematographer \*\*\*

This is a simplified chart for an **independent feature film** or **web-series**. There are additional staff members inside each department.

The **Executive Producer (EP)** sits above the Producer of the film. There can be several EPs. The EPs can come on before the film goes into production or after the film is completed. Their role might be opening doors to distributors, financiers, streamers and film festivals. They might also be a senior employee at a studio that is supporting the project.

The **Producer** is the person who **shepherds** the **film** from the **seed** of the **idea** to **opening night** in the **cinema**. They are responsible for the film for its entire life. The Producer will be doing deals for the film with streaming networks and any other platform that arrives in the future. Some projects last for decades.

If you are creating a **documentary** you can **scale** your crew right **down** to a director, cinematographer (DOP) and soundie. Some documentarians do everything themselves, others come in teams of two and split the load.

**Behind every successful project is a team of highly skilled individuals.**

# SCRIPT LAYOUT

## THIS IS A PAGE FROM MY SHORT FILM LIV TO SHOW YOU THE LAYOUT

A FEMALE FACE floating under water gracefully.

A head emerges from water in slow motion.

TITLE CARD: **LIV**

SMASH TO BLACK

FADE IN:

1 INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - MORNING 1

Almond shaped eyes smudged to perfection appear.

A machine buzzing getting louder is heard.

The eyes of a fifteen year old girl deep in concentration come into focus.

This is LIV TAYLOR a punk rocker. She has blonde dreadlocks with the odd strand of purple.

LIV glances up at the polished dragon sketch mounted on the wall.

RAY (28) punk rocker encourages LIV.

RAY  
Go for it...

On touch down she creates a beautiful, confident, artist's stroke.

LIV looks to RAY.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Yeah looks good.

LIV proudly smiles.

JASPER (19) a sexy androgynous punk rocker swings around on the chair and looks back in the mirror then to LIV.

JASPER.  
Sweet!

LIV glances uncomfortably, it's apparent they know each other.

JASPER. (CONT'D)  
Same time next week?

LIV  
Yeah.

JASPER gets up to leave, LIV'S eyes follow him out.

# SCRIPT TIME - FUN WORK!

## BREAK DOWN THE THREE ACTS OF YOUR STORY

## OPEN A WORD DOCUMENT AND START TO WRITE YOUR SCRIPT

In the **Extras** section there is a **word template** for creating your **script** and a **documentary template** in this pack.



# Documentary script

Project Title		Date
Time Code	Vision / Overlay	Audio / Voice Over Sounds

## L4: SHOOTING

- coverage
- cutaways
- shot list or storyboards
- gear
- style

### Coverage

A film is made up of several different shot sizes to tell the story in the most visual way. This is called coverage.

In the **Extras Section** I have provided some storyboards which will show shot sizes. Be sure to use lots of different shots and angles to tell your story. Be adventurous. Nothing is wrong, it's just your interpretation of your story.

### Cutaways

Cutaways are used to allow you to cut away from the main action and back again. Don't forget your cutaways to get you out of trouble in the edit! Like a cutaway showing the close up of a cup, so the actor can sit down. Or cutting to the clock for added tension.

### Shot List / Storyboards

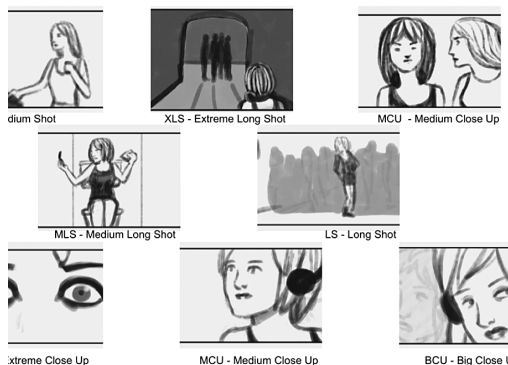
Some directors prefer to do a shot list over storyboards. They like to feel more free and open on the shooting day. Others like to have the whole film mapped out with storyboards. You choose what is best for you. You must turn up on set with a plan. Don't wing it! The crew and cast can tell when you are underprepared and you will start to lose their trust. There is nothing worse than your crew not believing in your vision.

### Gear

It doesn't matter if you shot on a phone or a fancy camera. It's about the skill, not the technology.

### Shooting Style - Portrait or Landscape?

If you want your films to be seen on the big screen, at major film festivals, or look awesome on your widescreen TV, then use Landscape. If you are creating a film for social media like Instagram, you might like to go with Portrait. It's up to you and your creative choice, choose wisely.



**SHOT SIZES**

## FunWork...

- **GO SHOOT YOUR FILMS!!!**
- **May the force be with you.**
- Check out the Extras for release forms, storyboard examples and funny iPhone versus Android phones.

# SHOT SIZES

USE THIS AS A GUIDE TO BE CREATIVE WITH YOUR SHOT SIZES



MS - Medium Shot



XLS - Extreme Long Shot



MCU - Medium Close Up



MLS - Medium Long Shot



LS - Long Shot



XCU - Extreme Close Up



MCU - Medium Close Up



BCU - Big Close Up

## SHOT SIZES

Use at least four different shot sizes in your films.

I try to use as many as possible to keep the **film visually stimulating**. Every film is different so just think about what you are trying to tell the audience at that moment. Then chose a shot size that is appropriate. For important information go in for a **Close Up** but don't over use it. If you want to show the room, do a **WIDE / Extreme Long Shot** so you are showing more information in the frame. Every shot delivers information to the audience.

# STORYBOARDS

TITLE	SCENE	PAGE

Okay, so the day has come to film your subject or put yourself on camera. **DO NOT STRESS... You've got this!**

Android or iPhone it doesn't matter just use the phone in your pocket!

### iPhone settings:

1080 or 4K

If you have 4K shoot in 4K so you have lots of the image to use in post-production (edit). But if you are using an older camera or phone 1080 is fine. Most people won't know the difference if your STORY is strong. **Yes, Story matters!**

### Camera App:

A camera app is great for giving you more control over your phone. I will put the links in the Extras Section.

**Android** - Open Camera

**iPhone** - Filmic Pro

### Slow Motion:

If you want to make an impact in your films you might like to use some slow motion to create moments for people to remember. **120 fps** is 5 times slower than **24 fps** which is the normal recording time. So it will look well sexy! Some phones now shoot in **240 fps**, check out your phone settings. You can speed up slow-motion footage, so if you want it at normal speed it's easy to change. You can't slow down footage in the edit very well. It always looks strange.

**Settings: 120 fps or 240 fps**

**Stabilisation:** Use a **Tripod** if you can, see the **Padlet Wall** for recommended tripods and adaptors. You can also make a homemade tripod with a broom! Seriously, you can - I'll show you in a video.

### Lighting:

Make sure you don't cast shadows on your subject or leave them in the dark. Add extra light to fill out the shadows. A normal standing home light will work just fine.

**Landscape / Portrait** - it's a creative choice, but choose wisely as you can't undo it!

## SOLO IPHONE SHOOTING

### SPOT CHECK

- **Clean** the camera or phone **lens**
- Check the **microphone** is on and **connected**
- Enable **flight mode** to your phone, you don't want any interruptions
- Check you have enough **space** on your **phone**
- Check the **lighting**. Are there any **shadows** on your subject or you?
- Do a **test run** then watch it back, make sure you put your headphones on to check the sound is working.
- **Now you are ready to start!!! :)**

### FunWork...

- Oh yeah you are going to watch all your film footage back.
- Start to create a log for each clip and make notes. Is the clip going to make the cut? What did the person say in that clip?
- I've created a **Legacy Log** template below. This will allow you to log your clips to get a 'birds eye' view of your footage. You can also do this in Excel using the same columns and adding additional columns that help you assess the footage. It's a good idea to log the footage, so you can find it when you need it.





# DOCUMENTARY IDEAS



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Sound Scape Ideas

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Additional Voice over

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More images and footage

# DOCUMENTARY OVERLAY CONTENT TRACKER

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TITLE

DATE

DIRECTOR

PHOTOS

VIDEO / SLIDES

ARTICLES

MEMORABILIA

## L5: POST PRODUCTION

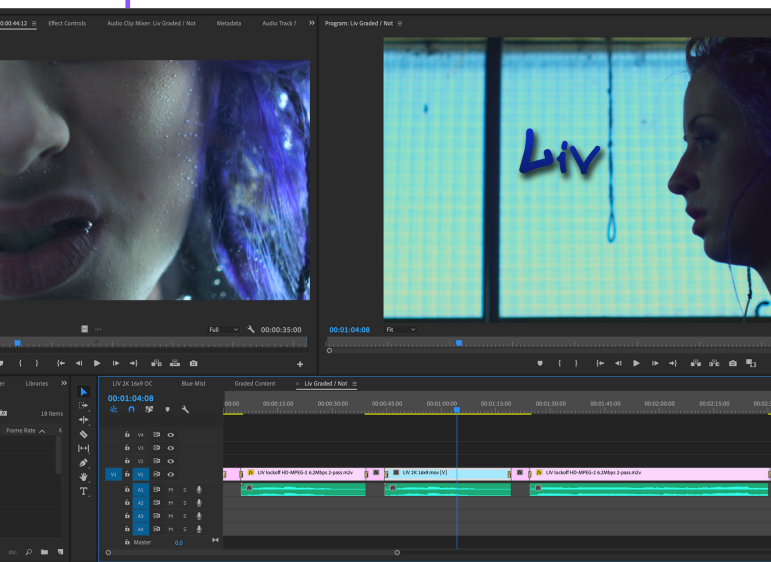
**Post Production** is the final stage of filmmaking.

**Editing** is often thought of as the **final stage** to **reshape** and tell your **story**. Now is not the time to hang onto your script too tightly. You can use your script as a guide but be open to things changing. Scenes might work better being moved around in the edit. In my short film **LIV** we moved a scene from the end of the film to make it the opening scene. It added dramatic and emotional weight.

**Be open** and **be brave**. This is the fun part of filmmaking, time isn't against you like when you're on set. The crazy side of filmmaking with all the moving parts is now behind you. **Relax**, take a deep breath and go into this next phase with a sense of calm knowing... **you got this!**

I'm not going to recap on every area in Post Production, there are just too many. So if you have shot your film, now might be a good time to **recap** the **videos** with me again.

Remember to look at all the cuts that are available to you in the edit suite. **Jump** Cuts, **Cutaways**, **Match** Cuts, **Montage** Sequence, **Cross** Cuts and most importantly don't forget to **cut on action!** When someone blinks, moves their head or leaves the scene **CUT**. Your films will look **WAY** better for **cutting** on **action**.



### FunWork...

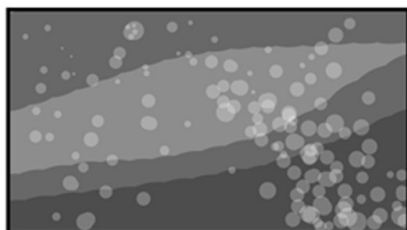
- Go cut your films and **create** your **movie magic**.
- Don't forget about sound effects, music, voice over and colour! They will all enhance your films.
- If you have any questions, ask them on the Padlet Wall or in the Private Facebook Group.
- Check out all the links I've put in the **Extras** section. Choose your editing program wisely. I prefer Premiere Pro but there are lots of freebies out there.
- Check out the **Links in the Extra section**.

Now you recreate  
your story in the  
edit suite  
through... images,  
sounds, music.

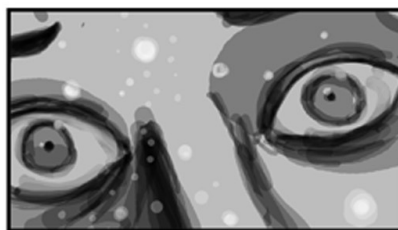
Four Stages of  
Editing  
Edit Cuts  
Editing Programs  
Sound Design  
Music (Composer)  
Digital Colourist

# STORYBOARDS

## THIS IS THE 'OPENING SCENE' OF LIV IN STORYBOARDS



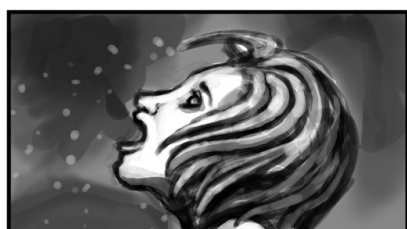
Scene 1 Shot 1  
BW, Blurred, underwater



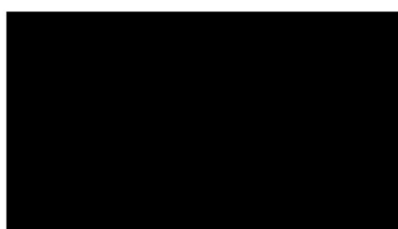
Scene 1 Shot 2  
BW, Struggling for air, SFX of chanting



Scene 1 Shot 3  
Underwater, toilet bowl cutout, struggling



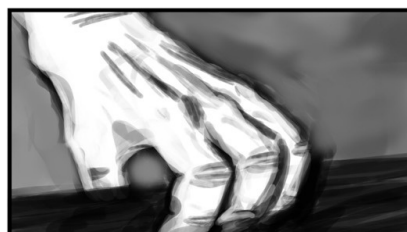
Scene 1 Shot 4  
Notes



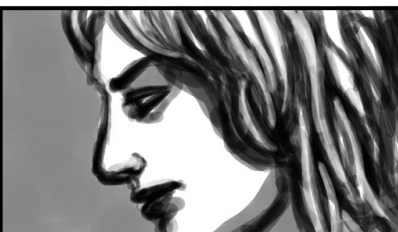
Scene 2 Shot 1  
All Black transition, sounds of tattoo parlour, street, breathing, racing heart; smells- Jasper's sweat, hot chips, Ray's coffee



Scene 2 Shot 2  
Colour from now, tense, uncomfortable, sexy; warm lighting,



Scene 2 Shot 3  
Jasper's hand gripping table.



Scene 2 Shot 4  
Liv concentrating.



Scene 2 Shot 5  
Ray watching the tattooing

These **storyboards** were created for Liv in **Pre-Production**.

Go look at the Liv '**Opening Scene**' clip in **Extras** and see how close they are to what we shot on the day.

The storyboards really helped me shoot quickly on the day. They also allowed me time in Pre-Production to visualise my film and give me confidence in my story. Never underestimate confidence!

My storyboard artist was Korshi Dosoo. Thanks, Korshi, I still love the storyboards all these years later! :)

# PAPER EDIT

Project title:

Draft:

Date:

Opening Act

**ACT 1**

**ACT 2**

**ACT 3**

25%

50%

25%

Climax

**SET UP**

Hero  
Storyworld  
Narrative

**HOOK**

Meat of the  
story

**END**

Resolve

Meat of your story – Act 2 – HOOK

Final Wrap up – Act 3

Characters

Drama / Conflict

Themes / Audience



## L6: SCREENING AND FESTIVALS

### How to get your film seen and get to walk the red carpet?



#### 1ST STAGE

- **Congratulations** you have finished your film!!!! Do a **happy dance** and pat yourself on the back... this is a **HUGE** achievement. So many people say they will create a film, then never finish it.
- Now you can enter your finished film into the '**Hear for You**' annual **Film Festival**. This is a great opportunity to see your film on the big screen. Keep an eye on your email and social media platforms for details on how to enter and the final deadline.
- I look forward to meeting you at the '**Hear for You Film Festival**'. And remember you are all winners for completing your films!

#### 2ND STAGE

##### After the Hear for You Film Festival

- You need to decide if this film is for **YouTube**, **Vimeo** or any other **social media** platform. If yes then upload and share it with everyone you know and '**Hear for You**'. The feedback you receive will help you with your next film. NB: Take the haters with a grain of salt, they didn't make a film, you did! :)
- The other option is entering your film into more **Film Festivals** in Australia and around the world. They can be highly competitive and receive thousands of entries each year but don't let that stop you. Festivals are great if you want a professional career in the entertainment industry. Don't forget to let 'Hear for You' know about your success, and drop me a message on social!

#### 3RD STAGE

- It's time to make another film! Yes, I'm afraid if you have caught the film bug then it's time to make another film, or at least plan your next moment on set. Take what you've learnt and charge forward knowing... **you got this!**

## DON'T BE SHY

- Stay in touch with your **Class-Mates** via the 'Hear for You' **Instagram** and **Facebook** group and share your future film success.
- If you are in the **same city** meet up - if it's safe to do so. There is nothing better than eyeballing another human who has the same passion as you. You just might find a **passionate collaborator**.
- **Padlet** is available to you after you have finished the course. I will keep adding new content to the Padlet Wall.

Finally, thank you for coming on this journey with me and being a part of our community. I love seeing my students succeed. :)

YOU GOT THIS!

## STAY CONNECTED

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