SECTION 1

1) AUDIENCE

I have decided that my target audience is going to be people in their 20’s-40’s, mostly women, and those who enjoy mystery/thriller type genres. To research for my audience, I asked a group of adults what they look for in a mystery/thriller show and I asked them to give me some examples of their favourite mystery/thriller type shows. I chose this audience as my show contains strong themes such as kidnapping and stalking, so an older audience would be able to handle the dark themes and would be able to appreciate the story arc without being too disturbed. People who enjoy the mystery/thriller genre would enjoy this show as the main focus of my show is based around a schoolgirl getting stalked and kidnapped by a mysterious person and how she survives and makes it out of the kidnapper’s den.

‘Stranger Things’ is a mystery-thriller series from where I drew ideas for my own show. I showed the group the beginning of ‘Stranger Things’ and asked if they enjoyed it and what they liked about it. They told me they like the suspense of the scene where the boys are riding through the forest in the dark. They also told me that the slow, tense music and the sounds of leaves rustling and twigs snapping made them tense and intrigued as to what is going to happen to the characters. This helped me understand how to make my show more suspenseful and tense with the sound and lighting. So, when creating my opening scene I will keep in mind the reasons as to why people enjoy thrillers so much and I will apply this to my scene to attract my target audience, ensuring that the lighting and sound is appropriate for my show and the setting.

The age rating for ‘Stranger Things’ is a 15. I would agree and so would the group of adults that I asked as they believe that the themes and issues that it deals with are not for a young audience. Much like ‘Stranger Things’, my show deals with strong themes and issues such as kidnapping and stalking which would not be suitable for an audience younger than around 18, although I felt as if 18 year olds would not be very interested in this show as ‘Stranger Things’ has an older audience so I feel if I aimed for an older audience, I would get a larger audience. Another reason as to why I aimed for an older audience is that they are usually out of education and into work so they have time to watch series.

I felt that airing my show on Netflix would allow people to access it without needing to get certain channels and without needing to rush to catch the episodes. Also, since shows such as ‘Stranger Things’ are Netflix exclusive, I thought it would be appropriate to put it with series that are similar as the audience would already be drawn to thriller/mystery type shows, so they would find my show with ease and be attracted to it as it is similar to shows they have already watched. I also thought that it would gain more popularity by airing it on the newest streaming site. I asked my group if they think that Netflix would be a good place to air my show and the majority of them agreed, saying that it would be appropriate for the genre of show based on popular shows on Netflix.

On the BARB website, it showed that in 2015, 16.6% of the audience surveyed said that they watched dramas such as series. Based on those statistics, I chose to make my show a drama as the genre was the second most popular on the BARB website’s survey. This will ensure that I get a larger audience by appealing to their preferences. Also, I chose the genre with current TV series in mind. Series such as ‘The Walking Dead’ and ‘Stranger Things’ have been popular with audiences like people in their 20’s and people who enjoy thrillers and/or mysteries. I believe that the genre I have chosen will attract the largest crowd as the current popular shows are where I have drawn ideas from and have been fit to the standards of the public, including character development and relationships from the beginning.

Lastly, I asked the group what they thought the genre of ‘Stranger Things’ was and some answered thriller and some answered mystery. They thought it was a thriller due to the kidnapping and the chasing and also a mystery as they did not know who had kidnapped the child and why. Also, they did not know when the friends would find out that one of them was missing as most of them had split up. I felt that taking inspiration from a current popular series would give me the best results for audience and also would help me with my research as there would be more and more added to the thriller/mystery genre for me to take ideas from. This would aid me in fleshing out my show as I could take plot ideas from different shows and add them to the base that I already had before doing my research. I wanted to make my show a drama and a mystery so, when I did my research; I found out that thrillers and mysteries go well together so I decided to add a tense mood to the mystery of who kidnapped the main character as it seemed appropriate. I also felt that if I made the main character a schoolgirl, this would draw in women as they could relate to her.

This research has helped me as it has made me realise how many of the current popular shows are all in a similar genre, what the target audience would be for a show containing the themes and issues that my show deals with, and also the place where I should air the show based on shows already on there.

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2) INTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

In my show, I would need to ask the actors for permission to film them and I would also need to ask for permission to film in the desired location. I would need to plan my filming time to avoid the bell and the sounds of people moving around outside of class so that it doesn’t interfere with the film’s audio.

I would want to get my actors together to practise the scene before filming it to make sure that all my actors know where they need to go and what they need to do to make my scene the best it can be with the limited resources that we have access to. I would like to film with a camera but I do not have access to one so I will either have to film on the school’s iPad or on my phone.

Also, as my school has bells so I would need to time my filming around the bell times so that my filming would not be ruined by the sound of the bell and the pupils moving around. This meant that I needed to stop filming during the bell when we were filming during double periods as we would be filming for the whole double period.

I would also need to make up for lack of actors as, if an actor was off ill, I would need to reschedule the date of filming and I would need to make sure that my actors would all be available at the same time and would be in school so that I can film with them in my scene and, if they are not available for filming or are off ill, I would need to know as I could film scenes without them to not waste any time not moving on with my production.

I would need to make sure that the place where I was filming did not have any people who were not meant to be in the scene and I would need to time my filming with the people who walk along the locker where I was filming. A problem I had with filming my show near the lockers is that people would always walk across the set and I had to stop filming as they would also make noise.

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3) EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

After the Watershed hours is an allocated slot given to shows with imagery that may be unsuitable for children. This lasts from 9pm to 5.30am and any shows broadcasted outside these hours must be appropriate for children to watch. The change between the Watershed and the hours after is gradual, not immediate as in to ease people into the new material. Channels should put warnings before any sensitive images may be shown such as graphic violence or nudity. My show would be on Netflix so it would not need to follow the Watershed, however, it would have warnings for the violence and bad language.

The rating system is a system that divides TV shows and films into categories going from U to 18. This helps audience know if the show they are about to watch is suitable for the age of the audience. Also, this allows cinemas to put rules into place that ban underage people from accessing a film that may be rated older than they are. The rating would be a 15 as there is strong violence as the characters will get in a fight. Also, there are some disturbing scenes between Benny and Hallie as she is obsessed with Hallie and tends to act creepily around her. This would rate a 15 as it has disturbing images and violence, which would mean a parental block would be applied if necessary.

Budget is an external constraint as it would need to take into consideration the costume, props, special effects, and set. I did not have money for my production so I had to use the props and costume available to me from the school and from the actors. In the locker scene, I had Hallie putting folders and jotters into her locker so I had the actress playing Hallie use her own jotters and another actor’s folder. Also, I used a piece of paper from a notebook to make the note from Benny that Hallie finds near the vending machine.

Health and safety is a constraint as it makes sure the set is safe to act on and props and costume are safe to use and wear. This is to ensure the actors are safe and are not literally harmed in the making of the film so the actors will not sue the filmmakers and will possibly work with the company again. I do not have any health and safety hazards as the school is a very safe environment and none of the props or costumes used in my show could be of harm to any of the actors or any members of the public.

My show would fit into Netflix’s variety as they have many different shows ranging from psychological thrillers to children’s shows. Netflix has a wide variety of genres and this is why I have chosen to show my TV show on Netflix as it also has a varied audience, meaning that my show would probably gain more popularity than if I showed it on a TV channel as people can watch it whenever they want and they can see the episodes in order.

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4) ONE RELEVANT KEY ASPECT OF CONTENT

Propp

The Propp theory is a system that places characters into their own respectable categories; the Hero, the Villain, etc. This allows the creator of the show to create the personalities for the characters and their roles in the show.

The Hero

The Hero is typically the main character of the show assisted by a sidekick. This character helps to bring balance to the storyline and fix any issues caused by the main problem. The hero in my show is called Maxine Johnson. They are Hallie’s closest friend and they are in the same Biology class. Maxine is not present until the second half of the episode as they were not informed of Hallie’s situation until then. Maxine gets a message from Hallie saying that she received a note from her stalker and Maxine reassures her that they will take care of her. The next day, Maxine finds Hallie in an unused classroom after looking for her. Her stalker, Benny, is there, sitting next to her and cuddling her. Maxine fights Benny and, after knocking Benny out, they take Hallie away from the class and console her. They are the hero in my story as they save the princess from the villain. I watched Star Wars and Rey inspired Maxine as she is also very heroic and intelligent. She influenced Maxine’s character as they are very good at solving problems when faced with them and can defend themselves when it comes to fighting.

The Villain

The Villain is the second-most important character in any show as they help to move the story forward and provide obstacles for the characters to work through. The villain in my show is Benny Timae. She is also in Hallie’s Biology class and has an unhealthy obsession with the girl. She is present throughout the whole episode as she is crucial to setting up the mood and atmosphere for the show. Benny’s love for Hallie has become almost obsessive, causing her to stalk her in an attempt to woo her. She ends up leaving Hallie a note saying how she is in love with her and how she has been watching her for months on end. This note reveals the stalker-like nature of the character. Benny then captures Hallie and takes her into an unused classroom where she duct-tapes her mouth and cuddles her. This makes the atmosphere darker to help the story progress. After a while, Maxine finds them together in the room and Benny fights them. Maxine eventually knocks her out and rescues Hallie. Benny is inspired by A from Pretty Little Liars as she gives small hints to what she is planning like A does. Benny also takes her victim in for emotional reasons like A does, except Benny has a romantic attraction towards Hallie.

The Princess

The Princess is the character that is in need of saving. This is not necessarily a female character despite the category’s name. The princess in my show is Hallie Kerry. She is the main character of the story despite not being the hero. She is close friends with Maxine and they are in the same Biology class, sitting together. In the back of her class is her stalker, Benny, who’s love for her is borderline obsessive. Hallie is walking to her locker to get her jacket so she can go home and, while she is closing her locker, Benny is standing behind the locker door. Hallie does not notice her and leaves the school. On her way out, she finds a note on the floor. She realises it is from Benny and she rushes home and messages her friend, Maxine. The next day, Hallie is kidnapped by Benny while on her way to her locker. Hallie is brought to an empty classroom, her mouth duct-taped and held captive by Benny. Half the day passes and she is found by Maxine as she is being cuddled by Benny. Maxine and Benny fight and, eventually, is rescued by Maxine who takes her home. Hallie is inspired by Will from Stranger Things. He gets kidnapped and found at the end of the season by his mum. This can be turned into Maxine finding Hallie as they are a very parental person and often take care of her.

Todorov

The Todorov theory is the theory that every show has five stages; Equilibrium, Disruption, Recognition, Action, and New Equilibrium. I have used this layout to structure my show and to help me think of what to do next.

Equilibrium

The equilibrium is the stage where the characters go through their ordinary lives as they usually would. This establishes the genre of the show, the character relationships and the time/location of the show. The equilibrium of my show is following Hallie Kerry’s story and her day-to-day life. It begins with Hallie in her Biology class, the class just ending. She packs up and heads out of class with her friends, where they part ways. She then heads to her locker, rummaging through her bag while walking along the hall.

Disruption

The disruption is the stage where the problem appears, not always to the characters but always to the audience. This establishes the villain/trouble in the story and how this interacts with the characters. The disruption of my show is Hallie is putting her things from her locker into her bag and, when she closes her locker door, it reveals a figure in a hood standing there. Hallie does not notice them so walks away from the locker. While she is walking out of school, there is the figure again behind a tree, watching her leave the building.

Recognition

The recognition is the stage where the problem is acknowledged by the characters. This establishes the way that the characters would react/cope when faced with a threat. The recognition in my show is when Hallie finds a note from her stalker on the ground outside her house. It says what they have seen her doing and they confess their feelings towards her in a disturbing way. Hallie brings this letter in with her when she re-enters the house, goes up to her room and messages her friend. She tells her that the police should get involved and that she will help her. She goes into school the next day and she gets kidnapped by her stalker and held in an unused classroom.

Action

The action is the stage where the characters act on the problem. This establishes the way characters would help each other out of the problematic situation that they have found themselves in. The action in my show is when Hallie’s friend, Maxine, notices Hallie is missing so they look for her. They end up in the unused part of the school and go from classroom to classroom. After a while, they find Hallie inside a classroom at the end of the hall with her mouth duct-taped. The stalker is standing in front of Hallie and Maxine and Benny, the stalker, fight. Maxine eventually knocks Benny out and they remove the duct-tape and take her from the classroom. Hallie is crying and Maxine comforts her, telling her that she is safe. They then call the police on the stalker.

New Equilibrium

The new equilibrium is the stage where the problem is dealt with and the characters go back to their lives with alterations after the problem. This establishes the way that the characters will go back to their normal lives after going through their problems. The new equilibrium in my show is that Hallie goes back to her house with Maxine and they talk together about their studies and what they want to do in the future. Maxine is distracting her from what happened and they help her through it slowly. Hallie and Maxine return to school the next day and her classmates are asking about her and how she dealt with it and Maxine tells them that Hallie said that she does not feel like talking about it.

SECTION 1

5) ANOTHER RELEVANT KEY ASPECT OF CONTENT

Representation

To get ideas of how to represent characters when they all wear similar costume, I watched Summer Heights High. In this show, all the characters wear the same school uniform but in slightly different ways to reveal different things about their personalities. Such as Jonah, who is very mischievous and wears his tie very loose or around his head. Because of this research I will make sure that my characters have subtle differences in how they wear their uniform to reveal things about their personalities.

Maxine, The Hero: They wear their school uniform loosely and messily to show the adventurous nature of the character. After the fight with Benny, they tie their school tie around their arm as they were attacked by Benny’s knife during the fight. This shows the character’s struggles and their protectiveness over Hallie. They are also shown to be the hero through lighting. The light would be coming from behind them, illuminating their figure to make them look more heroic and grand.

Benny, The Villain: She typically wears her school uniform very neatly with a hoodie over the top, usually with the hood up, to show the contrast between what she is saying and the tone of her voice, as she says cruel, disturbing things with a sweet tone. Benny is also shown to be the villain through the lighting. The lighting shining directly on Benny’s face will make Benny squint naturally, adding an air of threat to her character. This will also create hard shadows on her face, showing the contrast of Benny’s character.

Hallie, The Princess: Hallie’s costume reflects her character as she wears her school uniform is very neat and tidy at the beginning of the episode. However, as the time passes, her school uniform becomes more and more dishevelled due to the problems she faces throughout the episode. Another way that the character of Hallie could be represented could be through lighting. The lighting used for Hallie would be brighter at the beginning and progressively gets darker as the episode goes on. This represents her struggle and how her innocence was ruined by the kidnapping.

I will use a long shot of Hallie walking through the doors to the lockers to show the school setting. The school will be the main focus of the shot while Hallie walks towards her locker, establishing the importance of the school. I was thinking of using music when Benny is revealed behind the locker to emphasise the thriller genre but I could not find any non-copyrighted music that was suitable, so I decided that silence would be just as jarring to show the ordinary scene turning into one of horror without Hallie noticing.