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“Web Series: The New Indy Filmmaking Arena” by A.J. Wedding

There are hundreds of them on the web, and in production. Budgets vary widely, creating almost a wild west backdrop for a new world of filmmakers. A combination of brilliant and horrible ideas swimming together in an unedited universe where a ticket doesn't cost a penny. A place where the only thing that sets your project apart from others is how many hits you get. Democratic filmmaking? Independent filmmaking? The internet is becoming a proving ground for your big ideas.

My friend and I had developed a project for television which we had pitched around Hollywood. People seemed to love it. In fact, we had actually been told that we should give classes in pitching because they hadn't heard such a great pitch before. But Hollywood executives have to worry about their jobs...and with so much money and influence surrounding the business, they need to find big reasons why a show will make it...bigger than whether they think the story is good or not. When two unknown actors and writers pitch a TV series, no network exec is willing to stake their career on it!

The internet, on the other hand, does not YET have the same rules. There are many new media companies investing small amounts of money in web series, trying to find out what the biggest money-making opportunities are going to be. Currently, there are no glass ceilings in this world....if you have a great idea, you can get funding...and a great amount of creative control over your project!

A company leading the charge to bring high quality productions to the web is 60 Frames Entertainment. Being the first “filmmaker friendly” web studio, they attract artists who wish to hang on to their ideas, and share in the profits. Their flagship Web Series, launched Sept. 18th. is called “Infamous.” This is the series that we have been dying to get out there. And as you will see, we have attempted to not only make a great web series, but also, to raise the bar for production value on the web.

“Infamous” is a story about two guys that have the big dream

“Infamous” is a story about two guys that have the big dream of being actors...but they are stuck paying their bills with their mundane day jobs...as contract killers. We follow Tom and Anthony as they navigate Hollywood’s sexiest strip clubs, posh hotels, and their employer’s covert assassination operation while trying to keep their Hollywood dreams alive...

We had decided we would shoot in HD, with 35mm lenses, and finish the project with a grainy-film look. It’s kind of an homage to Reservoir Dogs and Swingers, so it seemed right. Questions constantly arised as to whether we would be able to cover the costs, given the modest budget we had. We knew that in order to make it work, we would have to call in many favors, which is exactly what we did. At no time did we intend to make any money out of the budget we were given. Raising the bar was more important to us, so that we could show internet viewers that we appreciated them. They deserve more than what they are given right now by other web producers.

Constantly raising the bar is how production budgets go up, viewership increases, and of course corporations put more advertising dollars into the programming. Currently, corporations aren’t sure what web video should be, so they are still poking around at product-based series that are reminiscent of 1950’s television. But little by little they are learning that sponsoring shows that appeal to their fan base (without blatantly taking over that show) is the way to go.

Over the next 5-10 years, we will see an increase in production value on the web that rivals many television programs. The web will become an amazing proving ground for future TV projects, and it will be a new place where there can truly be a working-class actor again, which seems to have been all but eliminated in Hollywood. But you should take advantage now, and get in before the doors all close. Remember the stock market boom of the early 90’s, where internet speculation ran rampant, and several unknowns became millionaires almost overnight? It’s about to happen again. You have a choice. You can watch it happen, or you can be creative, pitch projects you can do on the web with low budgets, and get on the inside.

Please check out our web series on your favorite web-video outlet, or you can see it here...new episodes every Thursday throughout October... <http://www.youtube.com/user/Infamoustheseries>

A.J. Wedding is the co-creator and co-star of the web series
“Infamous.” He also recently wrote and directed the horror
film, “The Disappearance of Jenna Matheson,” which is soon
to be released by York Entertainment. He won several
festival awards for his 35mm short, “Causality,” and has
acted on shows such as “Drake and Josh” and “Buffy the
Vampire Slayer.” He most recently played a role in the
Sci-Fi movie of the week, “Fall of Hyperion.”
