Kitchen Witch: Animated Independent Property Pitch Bible
Research and Development

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KITCHEN WITCH: ANIMATED
INDEPENDENT PROPERTY PITCH
BIBLE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts
Digital Production Arts

by
Kelsey Eaves
May 2023

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Anthony Summey, Committee Co-chair
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ABSTRACT

My thesis project centers around the production process for creating an animated program. My paper is a record of the development of my pitch bible and my efforts to raise outside interest in the property. I intend to use my work here to enter the animation industry as a jumping off point in my career. My research materials include various “Art Of” production books, Creating Cartoons with Character by Rocko’s Modern Life creator Joe Murray, and firsthand interviews from present and former television industry personnel. In this text I explore television animation pre production to highlight the creation of an Intellectual Property (IP) to appeal towards television executives and audiences. The current television animation industry has reached an impasse regarding the way content creators and crews are treated in regards to their properties.

I compare and contrast the merits of working independently on a project via crowdfunding versus working within the larger studio system. The projects helmed by Spindlehorse Studios, namely Hazbin Hotel, Helluva Boss, and Ashley Nichols’ Far-Fetched, have proven that animated projects can be produced by their creators and funded by the fanbase independently. My plan is to pitch this project to Titmouse Studios, ScreenGems, A24, and FredFilms Studios due to their notably favorable treatment towards their staff and creators.
DEDICATION

I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting me throughout my creative process. Thank you to Joseph Angel and Elizabeth Jackson for being my curious cheerleaders and for giving me the confidence to propose making a pitch bible in the first place. Thank you to Clemson University for giving me the opportunity and guidance to complete this project.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Professor Anthony K. Summey for your continuous advice and mentorship throughout this project. I would also like to thank Christy Marx, Calvin Brown Jr and Waymond Singleton for participating in my interviews and serving as a first hand research source.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td></td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

1. **BRAINSTORMING MY SHOW**
   - Concept Influences | 1
2. **KITCHEN WITCH DEVELOPMENT**
   - The Why and How | 4
3. **FINDING A GREENLIGHT**
   - The Current Cartoon Landscape | 7
   - Traditional Studio System vs Indie Animation: Which is The Best Route to Bring My Cartoon to Life? | 8
   - Merchandising and Starting a Fanbase
   - Concerns about IP’s Treatment | 10
4. **NEXT STEPS: PLANS FOR THE SERIES** | 11

## APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A:</td>
<td>Interview with Calvin Brown Jr</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B:</td>
<td>Interview with Christy Marx</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C: Interview with Waymond Singleton 22
D: Pitch Bible 25

REFERENCES 18

LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Kitchen Witch Concept Comic</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Wolfpeach Episode Still</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Lavender Lemonade Episode Still</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

BRAINSTORMING MY STORY

My thesis project is focused on developing a pitch bible and animated pilot to eventually shop around the television animation industry. The main goal is to use the skills and concepts that I’ve developed during my academic career to give my portfolio an edge and potentially lead to the next step in my post-graduate school career. Before I met with my counselor to confirm my plan, I came prepared with three story ideas to get the ball rolling. My first concept was an adaptation of a comic series I’d worked on and off on since college. *Breaking the Glass Slipper* tells the story of Vera and Hortense, two princesses tasked with completing fetch quests and escort missions for the Grimms Temp Agency. Realizing that the concept needed more legs to stand on, I put a pin in the idea for a later date. Back to the drawing board.

The second concept was an adaptation of the DC Comics character *The Elongated Man* [12]. The project, titled *Ralph & Sue*, would have been an action - comedy travelog show where the Elongated Man Ralph Dibney and his socialite photographer wife Sue travel the world solving mysteries similar to the 80s show *Hart to Hart* [5]. The show followed rich business owner Jonathan Hart and his journalist wife Jennifer Hart as they solved mysteries together as a hobby. Aided by their cheerful butler Max and loyal canine Freeway, the duo seemed to attract murders and conspiracies. The largest selling point is how the Harts loved and trusted each other consistently. Following the travelog
format, each episode would have either Ralph or Sue writing to their good friend Barry Allen in Central City about their latest adventure. The main purpose behind this concept is to have ideas for projects using currently owned independent properties. Most of the current television animation landscape is relying on reboots, revivals and reintroductions of properties and I wanted to show that I could work within those parameters to create. This project was deemed limiting due to both licensing issues and it reduced the amount of companies I could pitch the project to outside of Warner Bros. Media.

The final concept I began to develop is called *Kitchen Witch*. It’s a supernatural cooking show about two roommates attempting to co-exist in the same haunted house. The ghost landlady Autumn enjoys prancing and frightening her new tenant Capri. The latter’s only reprieve from the torment is to banish Autumn from the house with food made with a magic cookbook called a grimoire. Story development began in 2020 when I first moved to Charleston, SC to attend graduate school. It was my first time living in an apartment with a roommate, and the roommate tended to keep to herself. Weeks would go by before I saw or heard from her again, so I would joke to my friends that I had a ghost roommate. To stave off loneliness I began experimenting with food. That October, I found myself sketching a red headed bedsheet ghost based off a jack o’ lantern and I named the character Autumn Falls. My experiment that week was pumpkin pasta, and I drew a four page comic where the characters prepared the dish with an included recipe for the reader. I more or less forgot about the concept until late 2022 when I was racking

CONCEPT INFLUENCES

The witch character was initially named Ircabeth and was mainly my avatar with red hair. Her concept outfit consisted of a red sweatshirt, blue jeans, and white shoes. Ircabeth had large box braids tied up in either a low ponytail or a high bun. Meanwhile, Autumn’s hair was a lighter shade of orange than her final design. She had visible freckles on her shoulders and forehead. She was freely able to touch objects and had more of a laissez faire attitude. Later she would gain a chain and padlock belt to emulate Jacob Marley for a Christmas illustration. This accessory was quickly abandoned as it no longer suited the character. The characters’ relationship was much friendlier in this first iteration.

The comic’s writing style was largely inspired by the cooking manga series’ *Kitchen Princess*, *The Way of the Househusband* and *Cooking Papa*. *Kitchen Princess* is about a teenage female protagonist using cooking and friendship to find the boy who rescued her as a toddler [8]. *The Way of the Househusband* is a slice of life series following former yakuza (Japanese mafia) Tatsu “The Immortal Dragon” as he treats his role as a househusband with the same seriousness as being a hitman [14]. Lastly, *Cooking Papa* is about the salaryman manager who cooks for his family while keeping it
a secret from his employees [5]. Cooking manga series commonly have a wraparound story integrating the recipe and the characters making comments on the food taste, and I would like to do something similar for my final product. The name *Kitchen Witch* initially came from a 2020 Buzzfeed Halloween quiz result I randomly took. The term ‘kitchen witch’ refers to cooking and baking foods with the purpose of tending to mental and physical needs. Foraging edible mushrooms, flowers, and using specific ingredients in common dishes are large parts of this interest. The term ‘Kitchen Witch’ is considered a branch of cottagecore aesthetics, which focus on self-care, home upkeep, and engaging with nature. Cottagecore idealizes old fashioned, rustic lifestyles and traditional handcrafted hobbies like sewing and gardening [4]. In the following years, cottage core aesthetics have grown in the public consciousness and popularity. This shows that there is an available audience for my project.

The *Kitchen Witch* project had largely been on the back burner for two years before it was revisited for my thesis project beginning in September 2022. When revising the concept, I sought to establish a timeless aesthetic with a hint of nostalgia. I wanted the project to be both fun to revisit and welcoming for new viewers. The classic 1950s - 1970s Archie Comics art style, specifically the works of Bob Montana and Dan DeCarlo, inspired the humanoid character design elements. The half oval eyes and black lipstick mouths pay homage to the comic book style. For the supernatural characters, I looked towards Harvey Comics and Hanna - Barbera studio styles. The Harvey Comics characters Casper the Friendly Ghost, Little Audrey and Hot Stuff were the main three
references for my ghost character Autumn’s design. I paid attention to the thicker limbs and alternating curves of this design style, especially the large “B” shaped head. Her current design utilizes a peanut - hourglass shape for her torso.

CHAPTER TWO
KITCHEN WITCH DEVELOPMENT

Ircabeth’s name was changed to Capricia/ Capri and she was redesigned to include more supernatural elements. Capri’s current model wears a black vest resembling a double-breasted chef jacket, a green long sleeved blouse, black leggings and flats. Capri was given a braided blue bob hairstyle inspired by Archie Comics’ Sabrina the Teenage Witch’s iconic design [13], and each braid needs to have 8 bumps as a rule. Capri has a beauty mark on the left side of her chin as a creator’s design thumbprint. A lot of older characters in animated media wear half-moon glasses to convey a kind, maternal aura and I felt that the eyewear would be perfect for a television show host. There were concerns about Capri’s character design appearing too old so I created a second model sheet without glasses.

The ghost character has always had the name Autumn Falls and her hairstyle was originally inspired by Princess Daisy from the Super Mario franchise [11]. In her past life, Autumn was a socialite in the 1970s named Audrey Lemmings who partied hard in Brooklyn, NY. She was originally from a different comic where she was the adopted
daughter of a centaur bartender named Dionisia. Created in 2017, Autumn’s body was explicitly said to be made from a jack-o-lantern and needed the candle inside to stay lit or she would cease to exist. She worked as the waitress at a traveling inn along the road between purgatory and afterlife where she tempts customers with enchanted food and spirits that bind them to the restaurant. Autumn’s design originally had large triangular eyes, freckles along her body, black arm warmers and a chain and padlock belt. During the first round of redesigns, her eyes became half oval shaped with two eyelashes and she lost her freckles and accessories.

Autumn’s tail was designed to resemble lace ruffles similar to the Disney character Minnie Mouse’s classic skirt design, and her eye color changed from orange to pink. The main inspiration for her current design is “pillow case shaped ghost”, so her mouth was redrawn as a rip in her fabric. Her hairstyle evolved into a pageboy with a cowlick as a callback to her era of death (The 70s -early 80s). I was inspired to give Autumn a pageboy after seeing the younger character model of Bitsy Brannigan from the Apple TV+ show Central Park [3]. Autumn’s second design is her true banshee form where she becomes taller, thinner and scarier. Her body resembles a ripped gossamer drape set and her arms resemble long curtain rods. Her eyes and mouth holes become deeper rips in her fabric face, and she resembles a floating scarecrow. Her base design is very simple and distinct at the same time, so it’ll be easy for kids to draw her.
Both main characters have distinct silhouettes as one of the first rules of character design: being able to instantly identify characters by their shadows. Humanoid characters like Capri have five fingers while ghouls and ghosts have four fingers. Autumn’s red hair filled with cowlicks contrasts heavily with Capri’s blue bob. Both figures utilize curves but Autumn’s tail cuts off at the same height as Capri’s hips, giving the former a bell shaped silhouette.

A minor character in the story is the neighborhood cat Ouiser. It wasn’t originally meant to be in the story other than as a background element, but it didn’t seem right to have a witch story without a cat. Ouiser is a blue Russian cat with a yellow infinity backpack and a thirst for adventure. Originally Ouiser was supposed to have large realistic eyes that peer into the subject’s deepest soul. This was scrapped in favor of a Chuck Jones inspired redesign that increased the character’s range of expressions. Ouiser became more anthropomorphic and gained hands as well as more agency in the plot. Usually, they provide a key ingredient or tool for the episode as a walk in character. During the development process, Ouiser became a useful story element to cause conflict. Capri and Ouiser have become friends, while Autumn does not like animals. Capri tries to use every loophole available to bring Ouiser into the house. Autumn and Ouiser have a cat and mouse relationship where they both try to assert dominance over the property.
THE WHY AND HOW

Why do the characters live together? Capri literally signed a soul binding contract for one year to live in Autumn’s house in exchange for cheap rent. Autumn enjoys the thrill of the chase to haunt someone in the element for authentic screams. The culinary cantraps and haunted hijinx are mere annoyances for both parties. Capri needs silence to do her work, so she uses food traps to banish Autumn from the house for a period of time. She works primarily as a freelance fortune teller specializing in tarot card and tea leaf reading.

The story takes place during Capri’s “Branching Year” where she lives on her own in a new area and defines herself as an adult. Her experiences and recipes are recorded in a magic journal for the next tenet to find. Autumn gets the food and the chance to plan for retaliation. Autumn works at a tourist attraction scaring patrons with timed gimmicks so this is a breath of fresh air. Mostly, she gets to refine her skills and knows that her degree in Haunting Sociology and Communications isn’t going to waste.

Ouiser the cat’s presence literally disrupts the dynamic since it can sense Autumn’s location in the room and warn Capri. Capri tends to feed and shelter Ouiser in exchange for rare ingredients and friendship. Beginning in March 2023, I began working on a short reel to show for my thesis defense later in the semester. I hope to refine it into a short sizzle reel to convince networks to begin production on Kitchen Witch.
November 21, 2022
Comic by Kelcey Eaves

I respect Autumn’s right to existence but she tends to haunt me at the worst moments. Her timing is ….
truly impeccable.

Through my research, I’ve learned of a temporary

camtrap.

Vinegar, Salt,
Sugar, and Water combined in a
mason jar.

Behold, the
power of
pickle brine!

Heh. And now to enjoy my four hours.

Pomf!

Hello Morrigan.
Welcome back to the stream!

Hey, where are my pickles??
CHAPTER THREE

FINDING A GREENLIGHT

While developing my property, I worried about finding its place in both the current and future television landscape. I understand that it could take years for my project to get the green light. In the case of Netflix’s Castlevania (2017) it took over ten years to get the show off the ground after being rejected by five different distributors [10]. During the last ten years, it seems that rebooting old properties is the standard route to cash in on nostalgia from older audiences who were in the original demographic. The problem with this mindset is that it focuses on recapturing memories from a new generation of viewers. Either the shows focus on heavy continuity from the parent project that the average viewer wouldn’t recognize, or it tries to start fresh as an in name only project. For example, The 2018 Wacky Races eliminated most of the original roster of characters to cut down on costs (From about twenty to three) and added two new characters. To make up for the lack of diversity, the crew added an evil palette swap of the only female character Penelope Pitstop, dubbed Pandora Pitstop [12]. In short, the overreliance on animated reboots and nostalgia has begun to overshadow original independent properties. My biggest concern is that Kitchen Witch will be passed over for a reboot to cash in on a theoretical tapped market.

TRADITIONAL STUDIO SYSTEM VS INDIE ANIMATION: WHICH IS THE BEST ROUTE TO BRING MY CARTOON TO LIFE?
When shopping Kitchen Witch around, I have the option to go through the mainstream studio system or the independent animation route. With the latter, the project would be relying on crowdsourced funding and store sales to keep it afloat. I would need to be sure that I have a large enough audience secured for the property before diving completely into production. Usually, an iconic video or having enough people interested in supplementary material. Finding staff and setting up an efficient production pipeline so the process is streamlined is another factor to consider. A lot of animators have been setting up their own small studios to produce their shows on YouTube, but that’s usually after spending years in the television and movie industries. Examples include Vivian Medrano (also known as Vivziepop), creator of Spindlehorse Studio’ Helluva Boss and Hazbin Hotel. Nico Colaleo, creator of Ollie and Scoops, Hannah Dingle’s Satina, and Ashley Nichols’ Far-Fetched have all been able to contract big name voice actors and crew members to work on their projects and pay them consistently. In March 2023, the first episode of Lackadaisy, an adaptation of the long running webcomic, dropped on Youtube after three years of work from its two creators.

CASE STUDY: THE INDIE ANIMATION CASE STUDY OF VIVZIEPOP’S SPINDLEHORSE TOONS

Vivienne Medrano (born 1992) first started drawing in the third grade after watching the 1942 Disney film Bambi. She graduated from the School of Visual Arts in
2014 and worked as a freelance animator for two years before developing her first show, *Hazbin Hotel* [15]. Originally Hazbin Hotel was going to be a pilot project based on her 2013 - 2016 webcomic *Zoophobia*. Medrano ceased production on *Zoophobia* to work on the former, and began attracting a fanbase through webcomics. In 2018, she founded Spindle Horse Toons mainly to produce the Hazbin Hotel pilot. Spindlehorse employs collaborators from Medrano’s previous works like Ashley Nichols and Nico Colaleo as well as budding artists via application. While working on *Hazbin Hotel*, Vivziepop would develop a spinoff show with internet comedian Brandon Rogers called *Helluva Boss*. Both show productions rely on merchandise funding from Medrano’s Patreon account and an official store that fans can support. The latter offers seasonally dropped designs including hats, pins and playmats that supports the production 100% by the fans. The *Hazbin Hotel* pilot premiered on Youtube on October 28th, 2019 and quickly became the #1 video on the site in less than 24 hours with 163 million views. In 2020 it was announced that the show was picked up by rising film studio A24 for distribution.

If I were to explore the independent animation route, my funding would largely come from crowdsourcing, operating an online store, applying for grants or paying for it out of pocket. My biggest concern is tackling this large project without knowing how to efficiently lead a production team. There’s also securing consistent funding for paychecks and budget for the crew and the matter of quality control. I’ve attracted a small subscriber list for my Kitchen Witch production blog, but it’s not a large enough audience to justify the production time. This at least proves Kitchen Witch is reaching an
interested audience, and it gives me hope that this is the beginning of a loyal fanbase. At this point, it seems my best option is to turn towards the studio system for support, guidance, and consistent funding. At this time, my plan is to create a short six page comic with the characters to have a defined story to eventually adapt.

Figure 1.1: *Wolfpeach* episode frame

**MERCHANDISING AND STARTING A FANBASE**

When pitching *Kitchen Witch* to studios and distributors, I feel that I’ll have to plug merchandising opportunities to keep the production from being prematurely canceled. Using the character designs for stationary stickers, notebooks, and toy designs
can help attract a new fanbase. I can see a future board game modeled after Mousetrap or Kerplunk being developed to tie into the series if its popularity takes off. In character diaries, blogs and show accurate cookbooks create synergy between the creators and their audience. Having a pop-up restaurant based on the show would be a fun attraction at conventions and possible local events. Networks and studios are constantly trying to engage with their audiences through social media and their viewing apps. Sharing the in-universe recipes through those platforms would keep audiences engaged in the property. My greatest joy would be seeing people cosplay as the characters or seeing people posting fanart. In December 2022 I started an in-universe Instagram account for the project called Montgomery Way to increase visibility and interest in the project. So far, my account has reached seven followers and three interested viewers through art livestreams on Twitch. It’s a small number but its consistent and gives me proof that there is an audience for Kitchen Witch.

CONcerns about IP’s treatment

My main goal is for Kitchen Witch to stand on its own as a property. I want to make a show that has two black female characters embracing magic outside of an ensemble show. I love media with real world foods and projects the viewer can make at home. Mixing slice of life and horror in cartoons rarely occurs positively with black characters as leads, such as Daughters of the Desert or Eve’s Bayou. It is especially rare for animated shows where the black and brown characters are usually sassy/smart side
characters to take the reins. Recent shows from Disney Television Animation such as The Owl House (2018), Amphibia (2018), and The Ghost and Molly Mcgee (2021) have broken this mold.

My main concern is that my property will be mistreated under studio ownership due to it having minority main characters and its horror subject matter. My greatest worry is that Kitchen Witch will be used as a diversity piece for clout for the studio while giving it very little visibility on the channel. All the named shows tend to have erratic timeslots for viewers (usually early in the morning before their target audience is awake or with months in between new episodes) but Disney Television Animation will promote the characters on social media during Black History Month or Asian American Heritage Month. I just don’t want the property to be put on a shelf and canceled because the executives in charge of programming deem it unrelatable to a largely white middle class audience.

CHAPTER FOUR
NEXT STEPS: PLANS FOR THE SERIES

Kitchen Witch would be considered a flyer show that doesn’t fit into a standard television category. Its story revolves around living with a roommate similar to Friends (1994 - 2004) or Living Single (1993 - 1998), but the characters wouldn’t be considered close friends. Cooking and food is a facet of the story, but its not the entire concept. Keeping the episode continuity loose strongly appeals to networks so they don’t have to
worry about broadcasting order. Having loose continuity also helps expand the plot possibilities. I’d like to develop Kitchen Witch as a thirteen-episode miniseries with eleven-minute episodes. At the end of my thesis period my plan is to submit the pitch bible to animation studios for further development and possibly produce a pilot.

In May of 2023, I came across advertisements for a disreputable site called Stage 32 that essentially sold timeslots with producers and showrunners. It led me to further research how the modern animation industry operates and to make sure that I don’t foolishly give my work away to an opportunist. It also convinced me to look into finding a good film lawyer in the future to avoid being taken advantage of. In the end, I selected Fred Films Studios, Pencilish Studios, the Ottawa International Animation Festival, Moondog Studios and Titmouse Animation as my ideal production candidates.

I previously held a non-paying position as a Content Creator under Fred Seibert’s previous company Frederator Studios’ web division Channel Frederator in 2015 - 2019, and my positive experience there has given me confidence that Kitchen Witch would be treated fairly under the FredFilms label. FredFilms and Titmouse Animation both have online submission pages for independent projects and have glowing representations in the animation industry. These studios are highly praised for their creator driven shows, diverse subject matter, and their positive relationships with multiple broadcast companies. I feel that my project will be safe in their hands, and I hope the experience will be the next positive step in my career.
Figure 2-3: *Lavender Lemonade* episode concept.
WORKS CITED:


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Interview with Calvin Brown Jr.

Name: Calvin Brown Jr

Occupation: Television Writer/Producer


1. What was your first industry job? How did you find out about the position?

My first industry job was as a writing assistant on A Different World in 1989. I went in for a production assistant position and the line producer asked me what I really wanted to do. I mentioned that I wanted to write and he pointed me towards the open position.

2. What is your favorite part of your career? What is your least favorite?

My favorite part of my career is going to work and doing what I love: writing jokes.

When you work in television, you have to deal with unpredictable longevity. Hustling from one gig to another is exhausting, especially when the higher ups cancel a project unexpectedly and you have to scramble to put food on the table.

3. What changes, if any, have you observed in your field from when you first started to
where you are now?

I love seeing more diversity in the film and television industry. More black writers that look like me. It’s still a small pool of people, but the number is expanding every year.

4. Have you ever had to work with overhead departments (Standards and Practices, Producers, Studio Executives etc.) to keep/alter certain elements of your work? Is there a checks and balances system?

Yes. As a production staff, we deal with S&P on a daily basis. I’d suggest picking your battles to preserve the integrity of the show.

5. Have there been instances where you’ve been asked to change character traits/story elements to appeal to current trends?

We’re always asked to make changes to keep the peace and still tell our stories. The main goal is to avoid being censored to the point that story arcs are affected.

6. Where do you see your industry going in ten to fifteen years? I hope to see more inclusivity in staff and in casting.
Figure A-1: Initial Kitchen Witch concept comic.
Appendix B

Interview with Christy Marx

Name: Christy Marx

Occupation: writer, scriptwriter, and Narrative Designer

Notable Works: see my credits at https://christymarx.com/writing.htm

In animation, I am best known for Jem and the Holograms, G.I. Joe, Beast Wars, Conan the Adventurer, Spider-man and his Amazing Friends, and others.

1. What was your first industry job? How did you find out about the position?

CM: My first animation job was on The New Fantastic Four for DePatie-Freleng Enterprises and Marvel Comics Animation. I had just barely begun to write my first professional comic book stories, one of which was a “What If...” story about the Fantastic Four. I joined a group called CAPS, The Comic Arts Professional Society, and began to network with writers and artists in comics, some of whom were also working in animation. A friend of mine in CAPS mentioned that DePatie-Freleng was looking for writers who knew the Fantastic Four. I cold-called and ended up having a meeting with David DePatie. By the end of the meeting, I had my first animation writing assignment. You have to remember that at the time the concept of someone writing an actual script for an animation show was still pretty new. There was no established way to write these scripts, though David did give me a sample script to work from.
2. What is your favorite part of your career? What is your least favorite?

CM: Favorite part: the times when I did the development and put the series together, especially when I was given a great deal of creative freedom, and then was able to hire and work with the writers I wanted. Creative freedom and creative control over the writing gave me the greatest pleasure.

Not fun were times when I had to work with assholes, or was treated rudely by a story editor, or the times when some jerk of a producer thought I should do work for free. Fortunately, I had more of the good than the bad during my career.

3. What changes, if any, have you observed in your field from when you first started to where you are now?

CM: The most massive change is how animation is made and delivered on cable and on streaming services. When I started, you either needed to have a network fund the show with all of the restrictions that went along with being on a public broadcast network.

Then there the era of syndication where it was possible to do 65 half-hours, but required having a toy deal and being funded by a toy company. There were restrictions on what could be done on those shows as well, though they were slightly less restrictive than
broadcast networks. Both required writing to allow for commercials.

With cable and streaming, there is tremendous freedom, not only in what can be

done in the show (subject matter, tone, etc.), and there is freedom from commercials

and having to write to precise lengths. Animation was able to move into adult territory,

rather than being considered only for children.

Technically, there has also been the development of 3D animation techniques,

which has radically changed the look of animated shows.

4. Have you ever had to work with overhead departments (Standards and

Practices, Producers, Studio Executives etc.) to keep/ alter certain elements of

your work? Is there a checks and balances system?

CM: I had to deal with S&P on broadcast network shows and they could get crazy about

restrictive they were. The networks had licenses to broadcast shows for free to the

public, but this meant they were under government scrutiny. Anything that might cause

trouble was forbidden. Early on, I was taught to avoid “imitatable behavior”,

meaning I could not have a character do something harmful that could be imitated by a

child. No punching or kicking a person, no poking someone in the eye, no real-world

weapons, and so on. S&P had the power. A producer might be able to argue somewhat

about a note, but not a writer. It didn’t matter how stupid the note was, you had to

implement it. The same goes for working with a producer. You can try to negotiate a
note or find your own way to address their demands, but ultimately your job is to give them what they want.

5. Have there been instances where you’ve been asked to change character traits/story elements to appeal to current trends? Why was your solution?

CM: I can’t think of an example of that. The one example I can think of wasn’t about current trends, it was about something the producer fell in love with. I was adapting 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea as an animated TV movie. The producer had seen Moulin Rouge and was crazy about one particular scene in that movie. She insisted that I find a way to work it into Verne’s story. So I did. When a producer becomes that fixated on something, all you can do is get creative and find a way to make it work.

6. Where do you see your industry going in ten to fifteen years?

CM: I wish I had that kind of a crystal ball. I worry there will be more media consolidation and more corporate control of IP. Possibly new platforms will be developed and new ways to reach the audience. We might see more of a blend of interactive animation with passive entertainment so that viewers could either sit back and watch, or could take an active part in how the story will go. I would like to see technology that would allow more small, indie creators put out
finished animation that they own and control, and could release on the internet.

I know one thing that probably won’t change – the corporate powers that make the big animated shows or movies will always look for ways to screw the creative people – the writers and artists. It never fails.

Appendix C

Interview with Waymond Singleton

Name: Way Singleton
Occupation: Episodic Director
Notable Works: The Ghost and Molly Mcgee, Santiago of the Seas

1. What was your first industry job? How did you find out about the position?

   a. “My very first industry job was at Augenblick Studios in Dumbo, NY. I was an intern on the show Golan the Insatiable. I ended up calling the studio and asking if they were accepting intern applications (I DO NOT RECOMMEND DOING THIS NOWADAYS, even back then it was a bit awkward and they said to just email.) So I emailed, got an interview, and got the job!”

2. What is your favorite part of your career? What is your least favorite?

   a. “My favorite part of my job is being part of crafting stories. I like being able to add
artistic input in how characters get from point A to B in the story. Previously I worked as a storyboard artist, that of which’s job is to layout the script visually so that animators can bring the story to life. As a Director I’m solidifying how that story plays out visually, from boards to final animation to music scoring. So there’s a lot more creative control as a Director.

My least favorite part is that I’m drawing a lot less, than I was as a storyboard artist. It’s both a gift and a curse in that I’m not exhausted by drawing everyday which is good...but sometimes I just want to storyboard the episode myself.”

3. What changes, if any, have you observed in your field from when you first started to where you are now?

a. “There have been so many changes in the short time I’ve worked. Technology has changed, with different and new ways of running production and creating art. The industry itself is a constant rollercoaster of show cancellations, shows rising in production, and changes in how/where artist work (pre-Pandemic working from home was a very rare and now it’s pretty much the norm.) There’s been so many beautiful animated works that’ve come out since I started working. I’ve only been working a little less than a decade and it feels like so much has changed.”

4. Have you ever had to work with overhead departments (Standards and Practices,
Producers, Studio Executives etc.) to keep/ alter certain elements of your work? Is there a checks and balances system?

a. “Constantly-yes. Standards and Practices (S&P) and Studio execs are usually a big part of the process and usually help to guide the project to be the best (and appropriate) it can be. Not EVERY show has a S&P team but any big studio show will have studio execs that will chime in on certain parts of the project. Because the show is being made in the name of what ever studio is paying for the show, it only make sense that they’d want to have input. For the show I’m on now we’ll usually send storyboard animatics to studio execs + s&p to give notes on what’s working and what’s not. “

5. Have there been instances where you’ve been asked to change character traits/ story elements to appeal to current trends? What was your solution?

a. “Not usually. Or at least not yet. But I can see my self making the change if it made sense for story/character. It could depend on what the change was. If it is a really bad change I’d make an argument for why it shouldn’t be made... but otherwise if it’s not harmful, I’d get it done. At the end of the day, most projects I’ve worked on belong to someone else – not me- so I could give as much input as I can, but the final decision is on the showrunners and studio executives.”
6. Where do you see your industry going in ten to fifteen years?

a. “Anything can happen. I’m surprised at how much has changed in the past decade and I’m sure it’ll be so much more different in 10-15 more years. Technology, culture, economy all play in what the industry will be like. And AI artistry on the rise currently worries me to be honest. But I’m optimistic! A lot could be different but a lot could also be just the same. It’s hard to pinpoint where it’ll go, but it’ll certainly be a lot different from where it is now.”