

Me Too Again

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1. Abstract:

'Me Too Again' is a drama screenplay following Millie, a young actress who experiences abusive behaviour while working on a film set.

This screenplay tells the story of Millie Redmond, a young actress from the North who lands the lead role in a significant film in the south. However, Millie soon discovers a toxic and abusive environment on set, in which she suffers harassment, manipulation and exploitation from the production team. Millie tries to fight back and deal with the inappropriate behaviour and abuse. However, following a particularly brutal incident of abuse by the male lead Millie ultimately decides to speak out and expose the wrongdoings. This leads to severe consequences for the perpetrators and their downfall.. Millie's journey highlights the pervasive issues of harassment and lack of accountability in the film industry and serves as a powerful example of standing up against abuse and creating positive change

I am also submitting a reflective essay detailing my research and development process of my screenplay. (7)


2. List of contents:

1. Abstract
2. List of Contents
3. Declaration
4. Text
5. Characters
6. Bibliography
7. Reflective Essay

3. Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

4. Text*

 **Mallal_3011081489_Me Too Again-TEXT**

5. Characters

Character Biographies - Me To Again

Name: Millie Redmond

Age: 25

Physical Appearance: Millie is a true northern beauty, with a natural charm and allure that turns heads wherever she goes. Standing at 5'6" with a curvaceous figure, she exudes a confident sensuality that belies her working-class roots. Her long, chestnut hair frames her pretty heart-shaped face and warm hazel eyes, which sparkle with a mischievous glint hinting at the fire burning within her..

Personality: Millie is a fish out of water, a northern lass who has found herself navigating the treacherous waters of the acting world in the big city. Despite her humble beginnings, she possesses a sharp wit and a streetwise edge that serves her well in her quest to survive in this dog eat dog industry. Beneath her innocent pretty exterior, lies a steely determination and an unwavering ambition that drive her every move and step.

Background: Born and raised in a working-class family in Castleford, West Yorkshire. Millie and everyone around her discovered that even from a young age since performing in school plays Millie always came alive when she was acting. But she dreamed of something more. She juggled her job working in a fish and chip shop whilst attending part time acting evening classes at a local college. Her natural talent for performance and her striking good looks still didn't get her anything more than student short films or an agent. Millie's best friend Tanya had to drop out of auditioning for a feature film in London. Millie seizes the opportunity and embarks on a journey that would test her resilience and her ability to adapt to a world vastly different from the one she knew.

Motivations: Millie's primary motivation is to succeed, to prove to herself and to those who doubted her that she has what it takes to make it in the cutthroat world of acting. She is driven by a desire to escape the confines of her humble beginnings and to carve out a life of her own, one filled with the glamour and excitement she has always craved.

Strengths: Millie's greatest strengths lie in her adaptability, her quick wit, and her ability to charm even the most hardened of souls. She is a natural performer, able to slip into any role with ease, and her northern charm and disarming beauty often catch her opponents off guard and the southerners never quite know how to handle her.

Weaknesses: Despite her outward confidence, Millie harbours a deep-seated fear of failure and a lingering insecurity about her place in the world. She often doubts her own worth and struggles to find her footing in the unfamiliar world of the elite, constantly feeling like an outsider looking in.

Millie Redmond is a captivating femme fatale, a northern lass with a heart of gold and a determination that knows no bounds. Her journey from the working-class streets of Castleford to the mysterious and foreboding world of feature film acting. As she is met with the challenges of this alien environment Millie has to contend with prejudice discrimination and verbal, physical and sexual harassment. The events truly test her resilience and her ability to adapt and survive in even the most challenging of environments. Faced with a real dilemma juggling her career, moral beliefs and her rights Millie is a fighter with unwavering ambition, a force to be reckoned

with, like the character she is playing in the film "Evangeline" a true survivor in a world that often seeks to underestimate her.

2. Brad Doonan - 32, lead actor Comes from the East End of London. A rebel gone good, handsome but arrogant lead male and also Exec Producer on this feature film. Thinks he is the best actor in the world and God's gift to women. Thinks of any pretty actress as someone to conquer and bed. Was lucky to have some early sleeper hits in some low budget gangster movies. Models and idolises himself on Danny but as his star fades his desperation increases. He sees his costar and new lead female Millie as a challenge; his intentions are clear from the moment she auditions. To flirt with her, woo her and bed her. She was a typical pretty wannabe actress of which he had many in the past. The more unattainable Millie behaved the more Brad desired her. He regularly wields his lead male actor and Exec Producer rank to get his way with up and coming actors and usually discards them even before the film wraps. Deep down there is a talent inside Brad but he will not accept that his popularity is fading. This movie Relentless was his last shot. He doesn't tell anyone that he re-mortgaged the flat he lived in above the pub to raise the shortfall in funding on Relentless. He hides the fact that his Dad was Scottish and his ancestors were slave traders. He sides with Shane in exploiting the vulnerable Millie and he goes through the gears both on and off screen in pushing boundaries and inappropriate behaviour. If she wouldn't succumb to his advances he would break her emotionally and perhaps even physically.

3. Shane Moon, age 37, Director unscrupulous maverick who regularly goes off script, pushes boundaries, is reckless and confrontational with his story and vision, is like the Kubrick German director who pushes his actors especially Millie to be more revealing and sensuous in her portrayal.

4. Gerald Rosenstone - age 59 - Producer Came from a rich family. Outwardly he seems to be your typical non nonsense hard nosed businessman who only laughs at his own jokes; He is ruthless, ambitious and doesn't care who he tramples to get where he wants. Inwardly he harbours a high level of importance, viewing everyone else as beneath him. His arrogance manifests in subtle ways like dismissive glances, a condescending tone etc. He always feels no one can do their job correctly. He feels that Shane and Brad have made a mistake casting Millie as the lead. She was going to be nothing but trouble, In the end his hunch is proved right as Millie threatens the production for sexual harassment. He has the ear of Carrie the jilted actress and Carrie sleeps with him and Shane in a threesome which makes Millie's subsequent days on set even more awkward and challenging. He only switches on grovel mode when he has to keep the investors happy. He feels they are always breathing down his neck. Millie's antics to threaten the closure of the film and he was not going to stand by and let that happen over his dead body.

5. Carrie McShale, age 28, established actress, acting from the age of 6, parents both worked in the arts, Mum was an opera singer, father a stage actor in the West End. Comes from a privileged background. Studied theatre and worked her way up into TV and feature films. Gained most of her roles through her connections in her family (also), Carrie was the favourite for the lead female role of Evangeline in the movie Relentless but has been now relegated to the lesser supporting role of Tracey by Shane Brad and Gerald. who have instead given the role

to the young unknown pert boobied Millie. She despises and is jealous of Millie and absolutely detests her and wants to bring her down as much as she can. She enjoys feeling like she is still in a position of power and thinks she can outsmart and out act Millie. She uses another actress (extra) Paula to do all her dirty work for her in bringing Millie down and losing face. She sleeps with Gerald to have sway with her and get Millie fired from the set.

6. Neena Gupta - wardrobe age 33, came from an ethnic Indian, more disadvantaged family and took her education seriously in hopes of a better future. Has high morale, empathetic towards anyone's situation, grew up in a household where the parents are only staying together for the kids. Didn't receive the emotional affection from parents. Has a hereditary disease (congenital heart disease) that her child was diagnosed with soon after birth. Has loss of income due to all the appointments she needs to attend, can only work specific times as she has no one to watch her child while she works. She is assertive and resolute in the way she carries herself.

7. Sebastian- German sound recordist age 48. From a middle class family and went to a good school and studied sound engineering and production. Thinks of himself as a respectable man and even a possible 'catch'/womaniser. Does not see what he's doing is repulsive or disgusting and thinks of it as teasing. Deliberately spends more time with the women to make himself feel more important. This reveals his deep down insecurity with himself

8. Pebbles - make up artist ,age 29, on the surface very helpful and kind but has sinister ulterior motives (Happy to help give her water because she's spiking her drink). lots of 1 to 1 time with milly so she subtly tries to make her more insecure and mess with her emotions. Extremely jealous that Brad has turned his attention to Millie and will secretly do anything to ruin her performance in any slight way. Towards the end of the story her true motives are revealed (everything she had done to Millie).

8. Tanya - single mother with sick child, Age 28. Started working right after college and did not achieve a higher level of education to support her and her child. In the midst of divorce and juggling different jobs to pay off debt. Mental health is declining but tries to stay hopeful. Just wants the best care and support for her sick child.

10. Tracey - actor supporting role, age 25,has an ill child so has to give up her audition slot to Millie. Is proud and hopeful that Millie can finally have a chance at jump starting her career and landing bigger roles for herself

11. Josie Conner - 1st AD ,age 31, born into an upper class family and landed the job because of his family ties with Shane Moon. He is confident and self assured that he will do the job perfectly fine and will not mess up.

12. Mary Stuart Intimacy Coordinator ,age 43,

13. Gino Tagnelli Production designer ,age 29, came from middle class family

15. Lee White DOP, age 36. Sees all the harassment that Millie is facing on set but ignores it to keep his job. Bit of a closet pervert

15. Kira Knight Production Assistant, age 34,

15. Alex Jordan - Trans actor, age 31, was raised in a strict religious family who had certain views on sexuality and transgender people. As he progressed through uni (away from his family) he found himself having internal conflicts on his identity. After a while he is now confident and headstrong in his acting career.

16. Janet Redmond - Millie's mom, age 46, came from a working class family. Taught Millie to be headstrong and independent from a young age to survive in the harsh realities of society. Loves and is very fond of her daughter Millie. Confident and proud of her for knowing exactly what she wants to do.

17. Janice Hughes - Shane's mom, age 64,

18. Madeline Stern - casting director age 31, Australian, very experienced, loves Carrie and wants her to be in everything she casts. Doesn't like the fact that Brad and Shane have replaced Carrie with Millie for the lead role which leads to her acting passive aggressive towards Millie. She finds enjoyment in making Millie uncomfortable.

20. Matilda, wardrobe assistant age 38.

21. Bella, Script Continuity

22. Caroline, Production runner

23. Lucy 2nd AD age 36

24. "Evangeline" Millie's screen character

25. "Vince" Brad's screen character

26. Hilda - cleaner age 36 born into a working class family. A bystander who witnesses everything play out but doesn't say anything as she knows she doesn't have the power to change anything

27. Paula (Extra) Carrie's sidekick does all of Carrie's dirty work in making Millie look bad and trying to make Millie look stupid and fail in every way.

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7. A Critical Reflection on the Development of "Me Too Again": - From Concept to Screenplay
by Raza Mallal - Dec 2024

Introduction

Once I enrolled on the MA Res in Screenwriting at the University of York, I initially submitted several ideas and synopsis of varying story genres to determine which would be the most ideal to pursue as a body of written work as a complete screenplay. After several discussions with Andrew Vickers (VIC) my supervisor we agreed on developing the treatment of "Me Too Again". The development of my screenplay "Me Too Again" represents a transformative journey in both my creative practice and academic understanding of screenwriting. This reflective essay examines the complex interplay between research methodology, creative development and industry awareness that shaped this body of work. Through critical analysis of my creative decisions, research processes, and learning outcomes, I will demonstrate how this project has contributed to my own growth as both a screenwriter and academic researcher.

The Spark of Inspiration

When I first began my MA degree I carried with me years of filmmaking experience, but also alongside, rather unfortunately, the weight of disturbing memories - instances of harassment and inappropriate behavior I'd witnessed on film sets, particularly targeting females, especially newcomers. These weren't just abstract or isolated incidents that could be soon forgotten but were real experiences that I felt demanded to be addressed through storytelling. I wanted to do a deep dive investigation into the power dynamics within the film industry and the systemic inappropriate conduct and behaviour that flourished unchecked.

From Experience to Research

While I had written several feature scripts before, this project felt different. The research process became intensely personal. Each academic paper or research article I had read about the power dynamics in the creative industries resonated with situations and incidents I'd personally witnessed. Every industry report or press article I read whether about Hollywood, Bollywood or the UK media industry covering harassment brought distinct memories and faces to mind - real people who had encountered similar challenges. This wasn't just academic research anymore; it was about giving voice to experiences that too often go unspoken.

Personal Experience as Research Foundation

My initial research approach was, as mentioned, grounded in my own direct industry experience. I had personally "witnessed" several disturbing practices of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour on film sets. However, in order to produce a profound piece it was essential to move beyond personal experience and to develop a more comprehensive academic framework for exploring these issues.

Academic and Industry Research

The research process involved extensive investigation into:

- Historical documentation of harassment in the film industry in the UK and worldwide.
- Academic literature on power dynamics in creative industries
- Industry reports and case studies from the infamous such as the Weinsteins to Depp Vs Heard
- Interviews and testimonials from industry professionals in particular across independent filmmaking

This multi-faceted approach enabled me to develop a nuanced understanding of how harassment manifests in professional environments and the various factors that contribute to its persistence.

My initial script synopsis was as follows: **Millie, a 25 year old northern actress, gets her big break when she is cast in her first feature film. Now she could have the opportunity she had always dreamed of to demonstrate her star talent to the world. But the exploitation and harassment on the film set ignites her own insecurities and makes her doubt her own reality. In addition to the abuse on set Millie is ultimately attacked off-set in her trailer by an unknown assailant. A female detective Nicole leads the investigation to unravel the mystery. As she interviews the cast and crew it becomes apparent that there is more than one guilty party.**

Once I submitted my first outline of the screenplay, (based on the above synopsis), for review, my supervisor, Andrew Vickers (Vic), challenged me to dig deeper than I ever had before. I kept redrafting the outline to include elements of my detailed research. I spent considerable time writing character descriptions for every character in the story. However Vic would constantly ask "Who's story is it really?" Thus pushing me to look beyond my initial concept of the police procedural plot. His question led me to realize that at its heart, this wasn't a story about investigation - it was Millie's story, a young northern actress trying to navigate the treacherous waters of the film industry. So my initial police procedural story of investigating harassment on a film set underwent a fundamental transformation following these critical discussions with my supervisor. This change exemplifies the value of academic supervision in challenging preconceptions and pushing creative boundaries.

The decision to restructure the entire narrative around Millie's journey as evidenced in the current submitted draft represented a significant shift in the storytelling approach and wasn't easy. I had spent considerable time on the original outline, crafting intricate police interviews and multiple perspectives. But Vic's guidance helped me see that by focusing solely on Millie's experience - from her promising audition to the gradual erosion of her confidence through harassment - I could create something more powerful and emotionally resonant.

Character Development and Perspective

The decision to center the narrative on Millie's experience did mean a considerable shift in the overall approach to the story. As the story now was more person centred I wrote extensive and detailed character biographies for every character in the screenplay. Millie embodies "a fish out of water, a northern lass who has found herself navigating the treacherous waters of the acting world." This characterization allowed for exploration of multiple themes:

- Class dynamics in the entertainment industry
- Regional identity and discrimination
- Power imbalances between established industry figures and newcomers
- The psychological impact of workplace harassment and inappropriate behaviour

Creating Millie's character became an exercise in both empathy and authenticity. I drew from my observations of young actors I'd worked with, their hopes and vulnerabilities, their strength and determination. Millie emerged as "a true northern beauty, with a natural charm and allure that turns heads wherever she goes" - but more importantly, she became a character with intelligence, an independent free thinking woman with a steely determination and an unwavering ambition that drive her every move, but who wasn't prepared to undertake sacrifices that would undermine her own integrity.

Structural Innovations

The chronological restructuring of the narrative to follow Millie's journey from audition to abuse represented a significant creative challenge. This required:

- Developing a clear character arc
- Creating authentic supporting characters with complex motivations
- Balancing the need for dramatic tension with sensitivity to the subject matter
- Incorporating multiple perspectives while maintaining narrative focus

Creative Challenges

One of the hardest lessons I learned was about letting go. In the past where I would have been stubborn and inflexible in budging from my original plot lines and scenes, Vic's considered input made me more open minded in my approach. This wasn't just about being willing to make changes; it was about understanding that sometimes ones initial vision needs to evolve for the story to reach its full potential.

The challenge of handling sensitive subject matter weighed heavily on me. I wanted to expose the ugly truth about harassment in the industry without creating something that might further traumatize victims. While at the same time avoiding exploitation or sensationalism. Alongside my story outline in which I clearly defined the 3 Acts of the story I drafted a creative vision document to provide as a visual stimulant that I regularly drew upon to help flesh out the scenes. I set about my rewriting with a gentler approach to raising the important and relevant issues. Though a more subtle approach this manner still retains the shock elements of these incidents of abuse. This required careful consideration of:

- Scene construction and pacing
- Dialogue and subtext

- Visual storytelling techniques
- Emotional impact on audience

Industry Context and Representation

This revised draft of the screenplay thus addresses broader industry issues including:

- Systemic power abuse
- Gender discrimination
- Professional vulnerability
- Institutional complicity

These themes were developed through careful industry wide research.

Theoretical Framework

The project benefited from engagement with various theoretical approaches:

- Feminist film theory
- Power dynamics in creative industries
- Narrative theory and structure
- Social justice in media representation

Practice-Based Research

The writing process itself served as a form of research, writing and rewriting and led to generating insights into:

- Screenplay structure and development
- Character creation and evolution
- Narrative techniques for addressing social issues
- Industry-standard formatting and presentation

Technical Skills

The MA program has enhanced my abilities in:

- Screenplay formatting and structure
- Character development
- Dialogue writing
- Scene construction
- Research methodology
- Academic writing

Industry Relevance

"Me Too Again" addresses contemporary issues within the film industry, contributing to ongoing discussions about:

- Workplace safety
- Professional ethics
- Industry reform
- Representation and diversity

Learning Through Collaboration

Working with Vic transformed my understanding of the creative process. His ability to challenge my ideas while encouraging my growth showed me what true mentorship is really like. When he felt certain scenes or character arcs could be stronger, he didn't just point out the problems - he helped me see the possibilities for improvement.

Impact and Growth

The MA program helped me develop a more rigorous approach to screenwriting without losing the emotional core of storytelling. I learned to analyze structure and character development more deeply, to understand the academic theories behind effective narrative construction. But more importantly, I learned how to use these technical skills in service of telling stories that matter.

Looking back, I can see how much this project has changed me, particularly as a writer. The skills I've developed go beyond technical aspects of screenwriting - I've learned to be more receptive to feedback, more willing to challenge my own assumptions, and more committed to using storytelling as a tool for social change. Not be too precious about my writing or scenes and drastically rewrite where necessary. This willingness to revise and adapt has been transformative for my creative process.

With "Me Too Again," I've created something that I hope will contribute meaningfully to the ongoing conversation about harassment in the film industry. But perhaps more importantly, I've found my voice as a writer who can bridge the gap between personal experience, academic research, and compelling storytelling.

Personal Reflection

This journey has reinforced my belief in the power of storytelling to address significant social issues while maintaining artistic integrity. As I move forward, I carry with me not just new skills and knowledge, but a deeper understanding of my responsibility as a storyteller. Whether I pursue further academic research through a PhD at York or continue my professional screenwriting career, I know that this experience has fundamentally changed how I approach both my craft and my role in the industry.

The development of "Me Too Again" has shown me that the most powerful stories come from a place of authentic experience, rigorous research, and unwavering commitment to truth-telling. It's not just about creating entertainment; it's about contributing to meaningful change in an industry that desperately needs it.

I am now more comfortable stepping out of my comfort zone, accepting constructive criticism, and adapting my writing style. The completion of "Me Too Again" feels like both an ending and a beginning - the culmination of an intensive period of learning and growth, but also the start of a new chapter in my creative journey. Through this process, I've not only developed a screenplay I'm proud of, but I've also found my voice as a writer committed to telling stories that matter.

Conclusion

The development of "Me Too Again" represents more than just the creation of a screenplay; it embodies a synthesis of academic research, creative practice, and industry awareness.

Through this process, I have developed a deeper understanding of both the craft of screenwriting and its potential for addressing significant social issues. My hope is that "Me Too Again" will serve not just as a showcase of my writing abilities, but as a catalyst for important conversations about power, harassment, and change in the film industry.

Reference Notes

This reflection draws upon various supporting documents including:

- Research notes and drafts
- Character outlines
- Step outlines
- Critical analyses
- Supervisor feedback

These materials collectively demonstrate the depth and breadth of the research and creative process that informed the final screenplay.