

Writing your own story

by Joseph Paladies

Earlier this year, a third year lawyer and a management consultant put their professional careers on hold to form the television production company, *exiTVision*. Only six months old, the company has made significant progress.

When Mick Sheehy secured leave of absence from Mallesons in April, the immediate future was at the least uncertain. He and his friend and partner, Tim Grogan, based their decision to suspend corporate life on the strength of the shows they performed as 'Enter the Datsun' in the past three Melbourne International Comedy Festivals. Their production company found a home when Tim and Mick teamed up with Henrik Dannerfjord, film director and owner of the Richmond based, EXIT Films.

"When we decided to take the plunge our main goal was to film a television pilot," says Mick. "Working alongside a film company, we are fortunate to have the use of directors, professional cameras, and editing suites. The pilot's completed and we've sent it out. I suppose waiting for the industry's reaction is a little like waiting for exam results. What's equally exciting is the natural evolution that has taken place at *exiTVision*."

The company currently consists of four full time people: Tim, Mick, Henrik and another writer, Andrew Peterson. "What we've found", says Tim "is that people naturally gravitate to this industry. Whilst we've only got four [people] on board full-time, we have a further six people writing with us on a part-time basis. At first we were reluctant to let the team swell in numbers, now we encourage it".

"So many lawyers in particular are creative," says Mick. "It's a waste when they don't get the opportunity to express their creativity. We believe that there are many people out there in similar circumstances to us that would love to write and produce. At *exiTVision*, we've set up a creative environment to which people can come and spend as much or as little time as they like writing on projects. Some people have come with their own ideas, others work on ideas of ours. It's a win for the people who come to us because they get to a chance to make their work fly and it's a win for us because we get an increasingly interesting and talented collection of people to work with."

Since the arrival of *exiTVision* in EXIT Film's converted warehouse office, Sputnik, a web site design company has also joined the fold. The unique space is a blend of open doorways, polished floorboards and an array of windows flooding the floor with natural light. "The three companies encourage interaction which is yet another example of the variety of opportunities available working in this environment," says Tim.

Whilst *exiTVision* has a focus on producing television comedy, it is constantly looking for new writers and ideas both within and beyond the TV comedy field.

Any would-be writers can contact Mick Sheehy at *exiTVision* on 9421 0011 or by e-mail at mick_sheehy@exit.com.au.

