

IAF Grant report – Kyle Dolan

The funding from IAF allowed for a significant practical education for me as an emerging filmmaker. Initially, my application was to produce and direct 5-minute animated short film. The idea, a mouse falls in love with a computer mouse, is one that I have been wanting to make for years but didn't feel like I had the knowledge or skills to develop it until after I had been to film school. In developing this short film, Shay-Mouse, I was able to learn a significant amount from successes and failures.

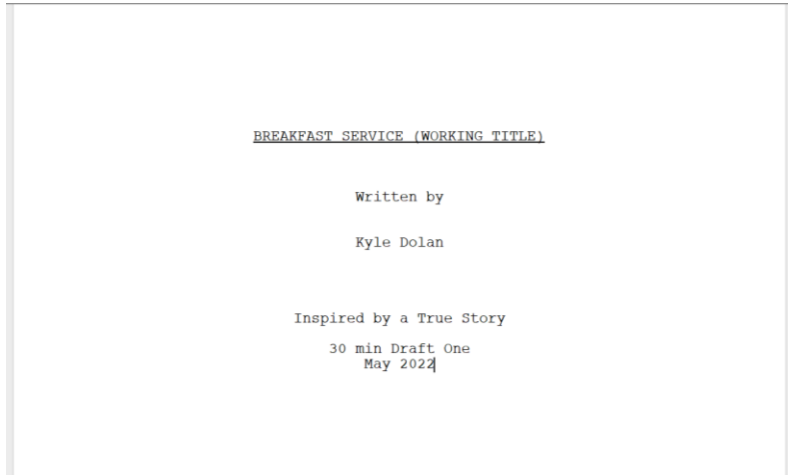
My experience is entirely in live-action filmmaking, so animation was an area I had never worked in before. As a filmmaker, I enjoy pushing myself into newer areas, because that is the best way to learn and expand my repertoire. I collaborated with a Melbourne-based animator, who had previously worked for Disney. However, a lot of this pre-production work was done remotely, with communication done over zoom meetings or email. At times I felt like I was on the outskirts of my own film and as Melbourne came out of lockdown, my collaborator got other professional animation projects and Shay-Mouse was not as much of a priority for him and the timeline slowly reduced and slowed down. Eventually, it became evident that the money from IAF was not going to be enough to deliver a completed animation to a high standard in the time needed.



After consultation with IAF, I was able to change the purpose of my grant from an animated short film, to writing an original 30-minute pilot. My long-term goal is to write and produce TV comedies. Both sitcoms and comedy-dramas have been a significant influence on me and it is the path I want to pursue in my filmmaking. Being able to dedicate a portion of time to writing the script full time meant that I could properly commit to it. It also better suits my long-term goals as a creative and has put me one step closer to working towards that goal.

The script is a farce called *Breakfast Service*, inspired by the birth of my cousin, where my uncle managed a hotel and had to deliver him while on shift. It's inspired by Charlie Chaplin and

Fawlty Towers and has a heavy focus on physical comedy. Even if the script doesn't go far past this stage, it has given me the experience of writing my first 30' minute script. Often the first script is the hardest to write and now that I have that experience, I can use what I've learnt in terms of structure, pacing and dialogue writing to enhance and expand upon in future scripts.



My experiences with the multiple projects that IAF has allowed me to work on have meant that I can expand upon my existing skills, as well as learning some new ones. I learnt from a practical viewpoint and the fact that my initial project didn't work out the way I initially intended allowed me to gain first-hand knowledge on a microscopic scale of the realities of how the industry works. So often projects go in and out of development and the production timeline isn't always a linear experience. I still intend to pursue *Shay-Mouse* in the future, as it is a passion project, but the experience of writing an original 30' minute pilot script has put me a step closer to my long-term plans as a filmmaker and given me the basic building blocks to work upon from future scripts.