

Hidden Camera

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The selection

Every one wants a chance at fame and fortune. I am no different. I am an adrenaline junkie, I thrive on danger, the thrill, fame is but a by product, but an interesting one at that. Fame bows only to pride. My pride is no different.

For the past ten years a very diligent and prolific cat burglar has burgled art galleries, jewellery stores and houses alike. Sydney proprietors lived in fear.

The cat burglar was known as the Panther. The only thing they knew about the Panther was that he was male, and knew the whereabouts of the most priceless artifacts. He could beat any security system. He was unstoppable.

Well, that's what he thought. You see I am the Panther, the notorious thief, and the master of my craft. I wanted to add another dimension to the danger. I wanted to get caught. Then everyone would know what I looked like, they would always be suspicious of me, but most of all I wanted the recognition. I wanted the fame.

I was caught; it was an interesting affair. The police force was quite... well stupid to put it bluntly, and I had to help them arrest me.

All in all it was a botched affair and I was eventually imprisoned. Which brings me back, once again to the fame thing. I could get early parole if I entered a house, pretty simple. If I was selected, I would be placed in a house, full of cameras, with a few other inmates. We would be broadcast on national television, and the public would evict one of us each week. How could I resist?

Selection was via an interview, and really insulted my intelligence.

"What's your name?"

"Anthony Rivera."

"Age."

"Thirty-two."

“Why are you in jail?”

“Because I got caught.”

The cop raised his eyebrows, obviously a man without a sense of humor.

“Theft.”

“Why do you think you should be considered for early parole?”

This is the part where copious amounts of bullshit are inserted. “Because I’ve done some time, and I’ve realized my mistakes. I want to start afresh.”

Without looking up the cop ticks a little box.

“What do you think you will gain from living in a house with other criminals?”

Insert more bullshit here. “I think I will be able to turn my life around due to the experience, learn life skills like cooperation, and learn from everyone else’s mistakes.”

“That’ll do. We’ll let you know if you’re selected.”

1. A Book

Dear Reader,

I saw you for the first time today

You picked me up off the shelf in the bookstore

You looked at my cover

Then you turned me over and read the blurb on my back

You smiled

You decided to buy me

You thought I would be a good read

But you hesitated

And I waited

As I wait now

Patiently

In the paper bag

Swinging

Swinging as you walk along the road

To your car

On our way to your house

Just like any other day

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*
HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

Based on a true story.

2. A Beginning

Dear Reader,

Settle yourself in

Snuggle up into your lounge

Your hot chocolate near at hand

Relax

Isolate yourself from the outside world

Disconnect your phone

Turn off your television

Relax

This is our time now

There must not be any disturbance

Are you ready?

Comfortable?

Let's begin

You are reading my short story

Dear Reader

A story of many things...

The Age, April 27, 2001

BOOT STAMPING ON A HUMAN FACE

Samantha Tyrell

Media Reporter

George Orwell had it right. What is reality television but a boot stamping on a human face?

We have endured *Survivor*, suffered the manufacturing of *Popstars*, braved *Treasure Island*, tried to outsmart *The Mole* and cringed as Cornelia said goodbye to the *Weakest Link*.

Now we can watch, as 12 twenty-something's do, well nothing at all.

Big Brother is Network Ten's answer to the rise of reality

television, with all the nastiness, scheming, manipulation, voyeurism and humiliation that is to be expected.

Advertised as a 'real soap', aimed at the 18-39 market it is televised each night for half an hour.

Over 85 days the 'contestants' are evicted one by one in a live eviction.

The last contestant or the one, who eludes eviction, receives \$250,000.

Ten is also promising an adults only version.

Around 1.6 million people tuned in for the premiere.

"*Big Brother* is different," says Tim Lucas, one of the shows creators, "It's possible for the viewer to affect the outcome, which appeals to a new generation who are used to the Internet."

So whether *Big Brother* is a waste of time, or 'a highly successful show, only time will tell.

Surely we are not so bored with our own lives, that we will watch it? Are we?

Hidden Camera. By Sophia Glenn

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

Katy was tired. She yawned as she opened the door to her apartment. Work was hectic, tedious. She kicked off her shoes. She was sick of the white-collar jerks that made her job hell. She threw down her keys and her handbag, checked the messages on her machine. There was only one message, from her mother.

Katy smiled. She hadn't heard much from her mother after she had split up with Dan. It was good to hear from her. She decided to return the phone call.

"Hey Mum, how are you?"

"No Mum, I'm fine..."

"No I haven't seen Dan."

"She did what?!"

"I can't believe it!"

"But that's not why you rang."

"Sure, I'd love to come for dinner..."

"Say hello to Dad for me."

"See you then."

She put down the receiver and headed into the bedroom. Her pyjamas were in a heap on her bed. She started to unbutton her blouse, unaware that she was being watched.

3. *Short Story 1*

Dear Reader,

Take a sip of your hot chocolate

It is growing cold

My story is untitled

I wish it to have a title

But alas

It is not so

I do not wish to have

Untitled

As my title

For that is not what it is called

Perhaps

Dear Reader

You could give me some ideas

When you have finished

Reading this

My short story

And that is it

Dear Reader

This is the end of my story

The contestants

We were a motley crew. I couldn't see that there would be any hope for us. Well, really, for anyone else. I was determined to get that prize. I wanted to get out, and to get back to my first and only love, burgling.

There were five of us in all. There was the nymphomaniac hooker, Sandy, the obsessive Internet stalker, Kirk, the alcoholic drunk driver, Teresa, and the seedy drug dealer, Jet.

Sandy was twenty-seven, tall, lanky with peroxide blonde hair and blue eyes. She wore too much makeup and had little self-confidence. Teresa, on the other hand was an arrogant high-flying career woman, with a drinking habit. She was around thirty, with long curly brown hair and brown eyes. She was petite but packed a punch.

Kirk was a freak. There really is no other way to describe him. He was a twenty-six year old computer geek, who stalked sixteen-year-old girls on the Internet. He was wiry, with horn-rimmed glasses and braces and had a nervous twitch.

Finally there was Jet. I wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw him. He was tall, thin, with greasy black dreadlocks and a hooked nose. I never did find out how old he was, though I'd say he wasn't much older than eighteen, making me the oldest in the house. I didn't mind though. I was going to be ruthless; I was only there for one thing, to win.

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

He watched her. He was obsessed with her. He loved her. That she belonged to him. He owned her.

He watched her as the white blouse came off and her hands undid the clasp on her brassiere. He wasn't a pervert, or didn't believe so. This was different it was pure. He loved her. The brassiere fell to the floor and he was staring. She was beautiful, so young, yet so troubled. She had separated from her fiancé. Which was good because now she was his. He sighed. She had her pajama top on now.

She sat on the end of her bed and pulled off her skirt, then she began to peel off her stockings. Her legs were long and slender. He smiled. She was so beautiful. Soon, he would see all of her...close up!

4. *A Crossed Wire*

What?

You are upset

Angry

Why?

Why is this so?

I did tell you it was a short story

Perhaps you weren't listening

No!

I did not mean to place all the blame on you

Don't leave Dear Reader!

I'm Sorry!

The Sydney Morning Herald, July 14 2001

DANGER IN BIG BROTHER HOUSE

Christopher Marx
Foreign Correspondent

A knife was wielded in the CBS *Big Brother* house last night.

A 26-year-old male housemate held a knife to a female housemate's throat.

The actual event was never televised but

had they been standing near the cameras that are live all day, the audience on the Internet would have seen it all.

The housemate in question passed all of the requisite psychological and background tests in order to be on the show.

The compulsory background test failed to reveal that the contestant with the knife had been arrested five times for robbery and assault, the charges were later dropped.

The contestant has subsequently been dropped from the show.

5. *An Apology*

Dear Reader,

I apologize

Dear Reader

I realize now

You expected a longer story

I shall try again

I will write another

That is what writers do

Do give me another chance

Dear Reader

Please?

The first week

A bit awkward were things that first week and the house was full of tension. I was having the time of my life. I had worked out how to play one off against the other, and how to come out looking the goods.

Jet was antisocial and moody. I had no doubt that he would be the first one to go. I really didn't like him, but I was the perfect model of self-control. At breakfast, the first morning, we all sized up the others. Probing, wanting to know what we stood up against. Teresa had set the ball rolling.

"Look we're all here to win, so cut the crap and let's all get down to business. I'm an alcoholic and I ran into a ten-year-old boy when I was driving, DUI." She was definitely a hard woman, she had barely even battered and eyelid during that speech.

Sandy had peered around the room. "I'm a hooker. I got caught and tried to solicit the officer who arrested me." Yikes!

I went next, taking the pride out of my voice, and trying not so sound as though I wanted to go back to my profession.

Kirk stammered his way into the conversation. "I...I s-s-s-stalked a girl on the Internet. I t-t-thought she liked me. But I gues-ss I came on t-t-too s-s-strong." I'd tried really hard not to roll my eyes. This guy was pathetic.

Jet had only grunted. "It's none o' your bloody business. So back the hell off!"

Strike One.

If there was anything to be learned from *Big Brother* 1 and 2 it is that the nice guy always wins. So in order for me to get out on parole I would have to play the nice guy role.

Believe me, this is a role I haven't had much practice at. I figured though, that as much as I'd like to give Jet a swift kick, I wouldn't come off looking like a 'nice guy'.

We seemed to sit around a lot that first week. It was pretty damn awkward to say the least. Jet did not speak, he only grunted. Sandy looked scared, worried. She was worried that she would stuff it up and sent back to jail. But that was something that each of us felt. It wasn't surprising that there would be some sort of confrontation before the end of the week.

"NOOOOO!" Sandy's cries woke up the house, well those who weren't awake already...

Teresa and I collided as we raced out of our respective bedrooms.

"Watch out!" she sneered.

"Sorry." I said, and with a smile too! This nice guy routine isn't that hard.

Jet had his hand over Sandy's mouth. "Shut up bitch!"

"What's going on Jet?" He sneered at me.

"The whore won't put out!"

"Maybe that's because she wants parole you dimwit!" said Teresa, "She can't exactly put out, on camera, and still have a chance!"

"That's the point bitch!" He cried out in pain. Sandy had clamped her teeth down hard on his fingers. Jet let fly a punch and sent Sandy reeling.

I turned to Teresa, "Take her out and get some ice on her face."

Teresa nodded. She took the weeping Sandy from the room. I turned again to Jet.

"Why?"

"I wanted to win." He shrugged, "I wanted to get her evicted."

I sighed, "You realize now that you've probably got yourself evicted?"

“Why didn’t she just put out! I’m going to kill that whore!”

“That’ll just make your sentence longer.”

“Leave me alone! You’ll all pay if I’m evicted. You’ll all pay!”

Strike two and three.

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

He was angry. She had rejected his advances, but no matter, she would come around eventually. He walked down into the basement and turned on the television.

That slut! There she was on his television, kissing another man, letting him tug at her clothes. Not just any man either, that was her ex-fiancé Dan. She was his! HIS! How dare she betray him. She would pay, as would Dan! They would both pay!

He watched as they fell, tangled onto the bed. He couldn't turn from the spectacle on his screen. Her clothes were almost gone now and that man was on top of her. He was glad he didn't have sound, the visual was bad enough. He screamed in rage and pulled the tape out of the machine. He would have his revenge.

6. *Short Story 2*

Dear Reader

You had best finish that hot chocolate

I fear it is no longer very hot

It is lukewarm chocolate

That does not have nearly the same ring

Not as catchy

It doesn't belong

Like *Untitled*

On an untitled story

Dear Reader

Are you still there?

Yes you are

But you are tired

You have had a long day

Perhaps you should go to bed

I will still be here when you wake up

That's it

Go to bed

Goodnight Dear Reader

Courier Mail, September 10, 2001

“REAL”ITY TELEVISION

Jim Brown

Guest U.S. Reporter

Reality television is not a new concept.

It has been around for years with shows like *The Real World*, *America's Funniest Home Videos* it just didn't have a name until recently.

In 1973 PBS aired *An American Family*.

For seven months cameras followed the day-to-day lives of the Loud family.

No games, no voting, no million dollar prize. Just people doing what people do.

The result was a riveting documentary during which viewers' saw a marriage dissolve and a son reveal his sexuality.

There are some that argue that reality television began with a radio segment called *Candid Microphone*, which later became the television show, *Candid Camera*, in 1948.

And how about this for a reality television show?

Take two competing groups, much like the tribes of *Survivor*, but

instead of seeing who can eat the most disgusting thing or stand on a post the longest, we let them bash each other—really go at it.

And we show the whole thing *live*.

When I made this pitch to a group of fellow journalists, they assured me that such a program would never make it onto television.

I told them it already had, it's called *Monday Night Football*.

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

Dan had left that night. They had said their goodbyes. It was over and Katy felt as though a weight had been lifted from her shoulders. She smiled as she walked up the footpath, rent in hand. Michael opened the door.

“Hi Katy, how are you?”

“Good thanks Michael, and you?”

“Not too bad. That the rent?”

“Yeah.”

“You’re always punctual.”

“I try to be. Will I see you at the Christmas Party?”

“I don’t know...”

“Oh, well have a good one if I don’t see you.”

“Thanks, I will.”

Katy turned, shivering. For some reason, she didn’t know why, Michael had made her skin crawl.

7. A Newspaper Article

You're reading me

Doubting

Was he really guilty?

You notice that some evidence

Was inadmissible

Would that have changed the outcome?

Was he really guilty?

What is the truth?

What are fabrications?

You can't tell

And it bothers you

Don't worry

You didn't make that decision

You weren't on the jury

It wasn't your choice

He was found guilty

Beyond a reasonable doubt

The first eviction

Jet's threat didn't deter the viewers. He left that Friday. Escorted out by two guards. We all sighed. Mostly from relief, Jet was gone, and we still had a chance. But soon another would leave.

The second week

I don't remember much from the second week in the house. There was a funny conversation, and Sandy cried a lot, but that's really it.

"I don't know that I like this idea of being watched," cursed Teresa. "I'm starting to understand how a fish feels."

"I'm glad to be out of prison." I said. It was true.

"This is still a prison." Commented Sandy.

"F-fish," stammered Kirk.

"What?" asked Teresa.

"F-fish only h-have a t-three s-s-second memory,"

"So?"

"T-they wouldn't know t-they're b-being w-w-watched."

"Oh."

Teresa rolled her eyes. "Sandy's crying again."

I shook my head. She hadn't stopped crying all week.

"What's wrong now?"

"She wants to go back to jail. Says she's a failure."

"The usual."

Teresa nodded.

"J-just s-s-screw her," said Kirk, "T-that's what s-she wants!"

Wow, when the claws come out they really come out!

I went to see Sandy. She looked terrible, and I told her so- in a joking kinda way,

I'm not that mean!

She smiled. "I know."

"Surely you don't want to go back to jail?"

"I have more chance of going back to jail than I do of getting parole. I'll just blow it when I get out anyway. I'll be straight back in jail again."

"You don't know that!"

"Yeah, I do."

I hate the nice guy routine! I want to tell her to snap out of it, wake up to herself. But I don't. I get up and leave the room. Our world is a crock. And Sandy was given one of the worst deals ever.

8. *Ode to Dear Reader*

Dear Reader

Are you still with me?

Of course you are

You are a dedicated reader

Not all readers are

They toss the book aside

Don't give it another chance

But you

You're different

You gave me a second chance

Dear Reader

You had faith

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

She was back. She had come back to him. Dan had gone forever, she had returned to him. He smelt the envelope in his hand, it smelt like her.

He watched as Katy flew out of the bathroom, the towel wrapped around her body. She had strewn her clothes all over the place. She rummaged around in her drawer tossing stockings and under wear all over the room.

He watched her get dressed. He watched as she stepped into her black panties with purple flowers and as she clasped her black brassiere. He watched she decided between the red and the black dresses. He watched as she zipped up the little black dress. The black dress was a good choice, he thought. She fixed a string of pearls around her neck and two pearl studs in her ears. She lavishly applied her perfume. She always smelt so beautiful. She turned around, picking up her bag, at the same time, unknowingly, facing the camera. She left the room, and he got up. He had a party to go to.

9. Unwrapping the Layers

Dear Reader

I have got under your skin now

You can't put me down

Your eyes scour

Devour my words

My paragraphs

My pages

Your fingers tugs at the corners

Anxious to know

To know what's next

What is next, Dear Reader?

I know

But you don't

Keep reading

The Sun Herald, May 26 2001

MARRIAGES MADE ON TV

Helena Seale

Foreign Correspondent

Marriages will now be made on television, not in heaven!

India's newest reality television offering, Swayamvar, is all about arranged marriages.

Sony and Doordarshan, are both onto this 'big idea.' Doordarshan was first off the block with his offering Swayamvar.

Slotted at 10 am on Sundays, each one-hour episode will feature a girl taking a few eligible bachelors through their paces, before settling on one.

But Shubh Vivah, by Sony, may pip them at the post.

The biggest draw card for the show is the host, actress Madhuri Dixit, "What attracted me to Shubh Vivah was the uniqueness of the concept."

It is believed that the show will be successful, because arranged marriages are the norm for families in India.

Indian viewers can be sure that in reality television there is more to come.

The second eviction

Sandy got her wish. She was escorted from the house that Friday.

"I feel sorry for Sandy," sighed Teresa.

"So do I." And I meant it.

The third week

The tension in the air was like a fog, and we were all blinded by it. Every step, every move we made we were conscious of how close we were. How near the end was.

"Kirk you pedophile!" cried Teresa. "A fourteen-year-old! The girl you stalked on the Internet was fourteen?"

"Beth was fourteen, Nancy was twelve and Sally was sixteen."

"You disgusting piece of shit! That is oh...that's gross!"

I sat there, dumbfounded. "There were more, weren't there, younger girls?"

Kirk smiled. "Eight to ten are good ages. They are so innocent."

"So you stalk the older girls but collect porn of eight-year-olds! You sicko. Oh my God." Teresa sat, shaking her head.

We both knew then that Kirk was out. It was down to us now.

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

Katy was enjoying the party. She thought that most of her neighbours were really nice. She noticed Michael as he came in and waved. He approached her.

“Hi. Merry Christmas.”

“Thanks, you too.”

“You look very nice. The black dress was a nice choice.”

“Thank you.”

“The red dress would’ve been just as nice.”

10. Truths- Part 1

Dear Reader

How do you know?

How do you know that what you read

What I have written

Is truly mine?

In this day and age

Nothing is new

Only rewritten

How do you know?

How do you know that I have not

Copied this from somewhere

Someone else?

You don't

Nor do I

That is what makes us

So special

We share a bond

Neither of us knows the truth

If there is

As I believe there isn't

Absolute truth

Only truth

Then is one of those truths

That this is mine

My original work?

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

Katy was sick of it. There was something scuttling around in her roof. She had avoided Michael, since the Christmas party. How had he known about the red dress? Was he watching her? How?

She stood up and went in search of a ladder and a flashlight. The scuttling was back. I'm going to kill that rat!

She heaved herself up into the roof and shone the light around. What was that in the corner? It looked like a... CAMERA! She pulled the camera out, through the hole she could make out her bedroom!

I'm going to kill that rat!

The arrest

I remember it as though it was yesterday. In hindsight, it was pretty damn funny. Leonardo da Vinci's airplane designs were on exhibit in the National Art Gallery of Sydney. Every one knew this, including the Panther. This would be the robbery, or attempted robbery, that would greatly increase his fame.

I cased the joint earlier in the day, checking the vantage points and the security system- I had already completed most of this research prior to arriving but I wanted to appear suspicious. The guards were too nervous to notice. They wanted to be off duty when the Panther struck. They didn't want the blame. Fair enough.

The security system was complex; they had installed it after the last time I had stolen a valuable art piece, a Frida Kahlo as I recall. But I could beat it. Breaking in was easy enough; motion sensors surrounded the work itself. Once I deactivated the alarm I would have thirty seconds to change the piece and reset the alarm before the secondary alarm would kick in.

It took me a little while to fiddle with the exterior alarm and two minutes later I was lowering myself down into the main part of the gallery. The length of cord had been estimated correctly and I deactivated the alarm around da Vinci's pictures. That done, I picked up the picture, in order to be caught red-handed and began my ascent, slowly.

The alarm rang out, the noise deafening. I waited. I could have easily gotten away, but I waited, impatiently. Something really needs to be done about the police force, probably should start by replacing Costa, but I'm getting sidetracked.

I slowly made my way up to the roof, and was greeted by three obese and puffing officers, and two eager young guards. Feigning surprise I made a run for it, which is hard to do on a roof, and eventually they caught me.

One of the cops radioed back to base. "You'll never believe who I just caught."

I heard later on that the cop got a promotion for catching me. Pity he didn't really deserve it...

11. An Argument

Dear Reader

You are a hypocrite!

How can you?

You claim not to like

Reality television

You denounce it

You detest it

You despise those who watch it

You IDEALISTIC FOOL!

Reading is much the same

You read me

You watch characters

At all times

At intimate times

You are watching them

Live out their lives

How is that different

To reality television

It is not

It is much the same

Although reading

Is not considered

A voyeuristic pleasure

But a sign of learning,

Education

Is that in store for us now?

Reality television

A sign of the learned

What will the world become...

Oh

You don't agree

It is the truth

You are watching

Reading

Watching

Watching

Watching...

The Daily Advertiser, August 6 2002

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Haven't we suffered enough of reality television? I thought so, but it appears the television studios do not, and the onslaught continues.

Surely the first two Big Brothers' were enough, is a third really necessary? How many times can we watch twelve young people doing little in a house? What did we gain from *Survivor*- any of them, *Treasure Island*, *Temptation Island* or *The Osbournes*? Absolutely nothing!

And *Big Brother Uncut* was just an excuse to see porn on television- but apparently this isn't seedy- and listen to these people talk about their sex lives. Who cares? That can hardly be called good viewing. What is our world coming too when we consider this to be entertainment?

Perhaps my problem is not with the creators of the shows, although I have little respect for them, but perhaps it is with those people that watch these shows. Where are your morals?

John Fletcher

Cootamundra

Unfortunately for you, there is to be a third Big Brother, and as long as they achieve the ratings they have been getting, this is not going to change. Sorry-Ed.

The last week

It was weird that week. Teresa and I spent a lot of time talking. She had a lot of stuff she wanted to get off her chest. Mostly, she wanted to talk about the accident.

Tears welled in Teresa's eyes. "Fact is, I know I belong in jail, I'm a criminal. I can handle that. I killed that little boy. I killed him, me. Everyday, I wish I hadn't. I wish he were alive. Not for me, but for him, his family. But out there it's different. I'm free to do it again. I don't ... I can't do it. I'm not ready to face everyone.... I'm a killer. I deserve to be in jail."

"You don't deserve to be in jail. It was an accident."

"But it was still my fault. I was drunk."

"You have to stop beating yourself up about it. You can't bring him back, but you can take steps to prevent it in the future. You're sober now aren't you?"

"Yeah, I guess I am."

"Do you know what the worst thing was?"

I shook my head. Where had that question come from?

"My sister. She was so embarrassed to have a criminal in the family. She wouldn't let me see her kids; one of them was my godchild. She said she didn't trust me, and that I would endanger them. Can you believe that?"

"That's pretty harsh."

"Yeah, that's coming from the same woman who had an affair with my ex-fiancé."

Things were more relaxed now. I liked it, and I liked her. She seemed happier too.

"You have a sister right?"

“What’s she like?”

“Oh, you know, a sister. Soph’s an author.”

“Any good?”

“Yeah, pretty damn good. She writes picture books. Really popular.”

The final eviction

I won.

Teresa kissed me on the cheek; “You deserve it. Good luck.”

“Call me when you get out. I’ll help you. I promise.”

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

He was upset. Katy had hardly talked to him since the Christmas party. He still couldn't believe that he had mentioned the red dress. She wasn't ready yet.

She was still beautiful. He watched her sitting in her bedroom, talking on the phone. Something had definitely changed. She was suspicious of him. She no longer dressed or undressed in her room. She knew. She must know.

What was she going to do now? Would she leave? Would she leave him? If she did, she would pay. He had forgiven her for sleeping with Dan, but he knew he couldn't forgive her this time. Not if she left him again.

He decided to go for a walk. He would walk to clear his mind and plan for the day she would leave him. It was inevitable. He would be ready, and because he loved her he would be merciless.

12. Truths- Part 2

Dear Reader

How can you watch

And decide

Who should go

And who should stay?

What you see is edited

So you only

Get one truth

A manipulation of truth

What they want you to see

You do not see

All that the cameras see

You only see

A version

An edited

Manipulated version

It is not reality

13. Sorrow

Dear Reader

I trust you

I believe we have bonded

And so I must say

That we are near the end

Only a chapter to go

You race to find how it ends

I already know

It is sad

Please

Do not race anymore

Our time will soon be up

But do not prolong it

For the agony will be too great

Dear Reader

What will become of us now?

The aftermath

This is the bit where I'm supposed to write that everyone is great, and everything worked out for the best. That would be lying.

Sandy was released from jail and committed suicide, she wasn't successful and has now been admitted to a mental facility. I visit her sometimes. She's slowly getting better. The operative word is slowly.

Jet's back dealing. Causing a few problems I hear. Treading on other dealer's toes. Word is he's going to get his comeuppance.

Kirk's back in jail. This time he's in for fifteen years and I hope he rots in there. He is one sick son of a bitch.

Teresa's doing fine. She's sober and is campaigning against drink driving. She's a really motivating speaker. Her psychiatrist bills are high, but we're coping. Art is an expensive and very rewarding profession. On the black-market that is. Our baby is due in September.

How's that for odds, three of the five from the house are offending again, one's in a nuthouse and the other's turned her life around.

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia Glenn*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

There she was. On his television... But this was different. She was spreading lies about him. He had never invaded her privacy. His camera was not an instrument of torture and violation but a window for his love.

He took a long swig of his beer. Bitch! How could she betray him! He loved her and she was spreading slander!

She wanted him to go to jail with criminals! He was not a criminal! He was only trapped by his love for her. Most of his tenants had moved out but he would get some more, once all of this settled down. He started the video; it was an old and well-worn tape, the one of Katy getting ready for the Christmas party. Before all the trouble had begun!

14. A Bookshelf

Dear Reader

You have discarded me

You have finished with me

Did you like the ending?

I think you did

I know you did

You have a new book now

A big one

Bigger than I

A Margaret Attwood

I believe

She's a good author

The dust lines my jacket now

I sit perched above you

As you read

And look at your new book

The way you once looked at me

The truth

If you liked what I wrote before, then don't read this. Sandy's soliciting again, and her boyfriend/pimp, has got her addicted to heroin too. To top it off, she's pregnant and he's saying it's not his.

Jet's in the money. Making his way up in the order, not only does he deal, but he's a mug who beats up clients for Jerry the Pope (That's the Mafia boss).

Kirk is teaching at a primary school in the outback somewhere. He's getting older and sicker; those poor little kids don't stand a chance.

Teresa was doing great, until her sister disowned her. She was on a downhill spiral when she came to me. She was a mess, a drunken mess. She's in rehab, not doing so well. I visit her a lot. Andy is two now, and doesn't understand why his mum isn't home, but we're coping. I have a nine to five job, looking after Andy, and when we're strapped for cash, I go out and burgle a major art piece. When Teresa gets out I'll get a proper job, if anyone will employ me.

Reality really bites. Four out of the five of us are re-offending, and Teresa's back on the grog. What has the world come too?

Television Magazine, The Sun Herald, May 2001

CRITIC'S REVIEW

I was asked to review *Big Brother Uncut*, and was interested to see what the reality television phenomenon was all about. I thought the Uncut part was continuous footage, unedited viewing. I couldn't have been more wrong.

I sat down with my children, Thomas nine and Jess eight, to review the show. The television was turned off after sixty seconds. I remember saying to my kids, "Well, we definitely won't be watching that."

I was appalled. I have no doubt that young children will be exposed to this and that many people will watch it. I know my family and I will not be watching.

15. A Farewell

Goodbye Dear Reader

You have moved on

And you wish for me to do the same

You introduced me to your friend today

Her hands are coarser than yours are

She is older

And has read many more books than you

I will go

But

Only if you promise

Promise to look me up

When you are lonely

And want the company of an old friend

We are friends aren't we?

Goodbye Dear Reader

I'll miss you

Hidden Camera. *By Sophia*

HarperCollins Publishers Sydney 2002

She wasn't as beautiful as Katy, more exotic, but it was all right. He watched her now as she got dressed to go out on a date. With him! She had been a pushover, and she loved him, she would never betray him like Katy had done.

He smiled. He had won.

A letter

Office of the Director
Capital Television Ltd.
Sydney NSW 2000

Adam [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Seaview dr
Port Macquarie

Dear Adam,

It is my pleasure to inform you of your inclusion into the final twenty contestants for *Big Brother 3*. From this twenty, the final twelve, selected to participate in *Big Brother 3* will be selected.

We request your presence at Capital Studios from the 21st to the 25th of September. Your accommodation will be organized on confirmation.

Congratulations on making it this far and good luck for the final selection.

Yours sincerely,

T. P. Woodhouse

Thomas Woodhouse

16. A New Beginning

Ah

Did you think I would find

A new Dear Reader?

You were wrong

My Dear Reader is YOU

Do not be shy

We are happy aren't we

We enjoy each other's company

You did miss me whilst

I was away

You did, admit it

I missed you too

You are tired

You put your bookmark

In my pages

And go to bed

But you hesitate

Am I your novel?

Your short story?

Your longer short story?

A reality television show?

The Author?

You do not know

I do not know

Reflection Statement

Hidden Camera is a postmodern story, in reaction to the reality television phenomenon. I have tried to blend fact, fiction and my opinions into one work, and this is it. Initially I intended to write a story that satirized reality television. I based this idea on a short story that I wrote for a competition. The original story was only five pages long and involved five Death Row inmates in a Big Brother house, where evictions took place by way of murder. This story was short, but effective, and I wanted to expand and evolve it. Two drafts, extensive research and a couple of terms down the track I was faced with the reality that the story wasn't working. Redrafting accomplished little, and after a disastrous Viva Vocé I was ready to throw in the towel.

I continued on, leaving behind the original idea and focusing more on the satire and how I could satirize reality television. I then wrote a few short, satirical stories. The first of these was a humorous story that placed six controversial politicians in a Big Brother house, where the public evicted them. The prize was a guaranteed seat in the next election. The politicians were John Howard, Mark Latham- who at this stage had been name calling in parliament, Michael Costa-after Peter Ryan's departure from the office of police commissioner, Pauline Hanson-before her charges for fraud, Meg Lees and Natasha Stott Despoija- before the fighting in the Democrats. It was a volatile house.

I also wrote stories where I satirized The Osbournes and Treasure Island, and was considering a compilation but I didn't really want to hand these in for my major project. I was also suffering from a large dose of writer's block. I was well and truly stuck. It was at this time that I wrote some fragmented prose. This was as a result of a classmate reading some of Margaret Atwood's Murder in the Dark. I thoroughly enjoyed the story, and decided to try my hand at a similar thing, which resulted in a fragmented piece of writing,

about reading a book. This posed another problem, how was I going to fit this prose into my major work. There seemed to be no way. But all hope was not lost.

I decided to revert back to the original idea, with a few changes. It would be a shorter story, and they would be criminals looking for early parole. There would be five of them and they would not be killed off. I would combine this with my prose and...well that's what I had to find.

When inspiration came, it was like a tidal wave. I bought The Blind Assassin by Margaret Atwood and read it in one day, I couldn't put it down. I decided to combine text types like she did in order to get my points across.

A Current Affair aired a segment about a landlord who kept cameras hidden in the bedrooms of his tenants and watched them- they were mostly women. It was made clear that one of his tenants found out and tried to take him to court, but the law couldn't touch him. I thought this was unfair and ludicrous, and decided that it fitted in exactly with my major work. So I wrote a short story based on the segment.

I also wrote articles for this work, the ideas for which, came from articles I had collected from all of my initial research. I also obtained a book called 24/7, which was similar to my original concept. The author included his thoughts on reality television and the how far people would go to for the sake of entertainment.

I had written about 5,000 words, and was once again stuck for ideas, but this time also running out of time when I saw, on the news, a piece about arranged marriages being televised in India. I was intrigued and did some research on the web. What I found was most interesting and so I included it in my major work as an interest piece. It fitted in with my ideas, but it also added a little extra depth to the story.

In hindsight I am surprised that my story turned out to be post modern. If I had been told this at the start of this I would have laughed as it was not until halfway through this

that I really started getting into post modernism and reading authors like Italo Calvino and Margaret Atwood, who were the inspiration for the structure of my story.

Throughout this project I struggled with writing, inspiration and ideas, no doubt all writers do but I also feel that I have come out of this with more knowledge than I began with. I can now look at my creative writing more analytically and say this isn't working because...and take steps to fix it. I have learnt that inspiration can come at any time, and these bolts of lightning can be few and far between, they don't have a deadline, but I do.

I enjoyed this work, even though it had its ups and its many downs. The truth still hurts, but if your story isn't working, it isn't working. Advice and suggestions should be fully considered before action is taken. After the Open Mike Night, where we all shared our work, there were contradictory comments. For this you need to think about what they're saying and what you know is right. You have to trust your instinct.

Hidden Camera blends fiction, fact and my opinions with notions of truth and ideas on reading. It departs from normative structure and is what I consider a 'fun' read. You can't just sit back and read it, you have to think about it. And that's what I want the reader to do. I want them to bring their own meaning to my work, but at the same time, read my thoughts and opinions, mixed with reality-to show what reality television can become.

I have no doubt that persistence paid off. In this case it was a lot of persistence, but I know it was worth it.

ENGLISH EXTENSION 2 — Short Story

[View Sample](#)

Band E3/4

Sample 2

Title: Hidden Camera

Hidden Camera presents a substantial major work which demonstrates originality in its attempt to satirise the contemporary media phenomenon of reality TV. It targets elements of voyeurism and raises questions about truth, offering an original synthesis of ideas.

The use of postmodern techniques of fragmented text, multiple narratives and multiple forms and self-references display an accomplished ability to formulate complex concepts and manipulate language and medium coherently to engage an audience.

The student is able to articulate the process of development of the composition effectively but reflection is weakened by lack of detail regarding the independent investigation.