

# ***Funny Business***

## Visual Treatment

**A young Toronto comic struggles to balance pursuing her dream career in stand-up and making rent in the cost relentless city.**

***What's it take to be a female up and coming comic in the Six?***

*Funny Business* explores the financial issues of Toronto's stand up industry through the experience of passionate 24-year-old comedian Jordanne Brown. The short documentary will share Jordanne's attempts to break into the Toronto comedy scene and find her unique voice; as well as the less glamorous side of working part-time jobs and performing for free after years of running through the stand up circuit. With today's social media clout, it appears like any artist can *make it* but this film will dig into the real determination it takes to pursue your dreams and the emotional burnout that can stifle an artist in the comedy business that involves a lot more than getting laughs.

*Funny Business* will also highlight the diverse voices of Jordanne's fellow comic friends on the challenges of being in the biz including her roommate and best friend Isabella Campbell. Like any successful artist, it takes a village, and Jordanne's community has had a big influence on her journey. *Funny Business* will document the hustle of her daily life as she runs from her food-service job to midnight performances — all while letting her big heart and quirky personality shine through the process.

**Jordanne Brown** is an ambitious Toronto based comedian, doing everything she can to make her mark in the local comedy scene. Since rediscovering her love for comedy by taking an improv class four years ago, she packed her bags and moved to Toronto from Saskatchewan. She spends her time constantly creating by co-hosting her own podcast *F\*ckgirls*, starring in her own web series under the same name, performing in comedy shows and most recently auditioning for TV series. However, with all of this excitement, there is a hard financial reality of living in a city like Toronto. This leads to



Jordanne constantly performing a balancing act between working at Parka Vegan Restaurant and practicing what she loves to do.

**Isabella Campbell** is Jordanne's roommate and fellow comedian who has been performing stand-up and sketch comedy for over 4 years. They met during their two-year comedy program at Humber College and have been best friends since. Like Jordanne, Isabella also works part-time as a server at a restaurant to make up for her lack of steady income in the comedy industry. They practice their jokes with each other and share the same group of comedian friends that we also plan to feature in the documentary during a dinner party hosted at the duo's apartment.



Jordanne and Isabella are the hearts of this documentary and we want their stories to inspire young Gen Z artists to pursue their dreams no matter what setbacks they face. They are proof for teens growing up now that hard work pays off and if Jordanne can take big risks to do what she loves they can too! We are proud to share Jordanne's personal journey and current struggles to remind younger viewers that life is always a work in progress because we're all human. If you're excited and passionate about something, there is a community to share it with if you want it bad enough. We also hope to challenge people's misconceptions of what it takes to be a stand-up comedian through the perspective of two hustling young women in the industry. Although pursuing the comedic arts can be competitive this doc shows that there are examples of women supporting and pushing each other up.

To mirror Jordanne's personality, the style of the film will be comedic and fast-paced. To keep the energy up we will have lots of cuts during interviews to what the person is talking about. The music will also be upbeat to motivate the fast pace. The one exception to this pacing will be during the emotional bridge of the film when Jordanne talks about her experience with creative burnout. Slow-paced music in this scene will build into the final climax of the story. The color-grading of the film will be light and bring out bright tones to keep with the positive mood. Warmer tones will be used from natural lighting to create a happy feel that compliments our talents' sense of humor and quirkiness.

## **The Comedy Performances**

In one night, Jordanne will be performing at two different comedy shows downtown Toronto. We will record her warming up backstage for the show - doing vocal exercises, rehearsing jokes and any other her pre-show rituals she has. The footage of her warming up and walking on stage will be used as the hook at the beginning of the documentary while her actual performance and audience reactions will be saved for the Superbowl ending of the film. At the end of the film, we will also show Jordanne jumping in an Uber to rush over to her second performance near the east end of Toronto. In this scene, we want to capture the energy of the crowd and the nervous energy of Jordanne performing. After she's done performing, we will ask her questions about how her sets went on her way home.

## **Jordanne's Main Interview**

Jordanne's main on-camera interview will be shot at her apartment. In this interview, she will discuss where her passion for comedy/performance comes from and why she took the risk to drop out of teachers' college and move to Toronto from Saskatchewan to pursue her dream. She will talk about her family's continued support, developing her alternative style at Humber college and some of her first experiences in the Toronto stand up comic circuit. She'll talk about one of the nights she performed and got paid with a cup of beer and explain how that's normal. This interview will be used for many voice-overs and will be a driving voice of the documentary. It will also include Jordanne's discussions of the emotional stress that comes from her constant financial strain and side-hustle burnout.

## **Parka Restaurant**

Parka is the vegan restaurant Jordanne works at part-time when she's not working on her comedy. We will be capturing a variety of b-roll of her working to have visuals when she talks about her work and to show her attitude with her co-workers. We plan to get shots of her joking around with co-workers and making food. To add to the quirky style of shooting we're going for we will also capture shots of her making eye contact at the camera while she works. This scene will be important to pair with voice overs of her talking about how her boss supports her stand-up career by allowing her to put on comedy performances at the restaurant.

## The Budget

Staying relevant in the stand up scene takes a lot more than reaching out to people for weekly gigs. In this scene, Jordanne will go into detail about how she keeps her calendar organized and financials straight in her budget. This scene will take place in Jordanne's bedroom where she will have all her receipts from the week neatly laid out on her desk/bed in front of her. She will talk about how she budgets her money for rent each month including rough numbers of what she makes from stand-up gigs versus her food service job. In this setup, she will talk to the camera as she notes her spending on her computer for the week. Because Jordanne is a performer, we hope she can really play up this scene and make it informative but also funny. She may also talk briefly in this scene about how she asks or is asked to perform at certain comedy shows while she writes dates down in her agenda. This scene is meant to poke fun at the stereotype of the 'messy' artist who isn't organized because it shows the entrepreneurial mindset that Jordanne has to have.

Jordanne's Bedroom:



Example of using window for natural light:



## Dinner Party Scene

The dinner party is an important recurring scene throughout the documentary. For the scene, Jordanne and her roommate Isabella will cook dinner and invite their other comedian friends over to talk about the industry, struggles they face and the supportive community that keeps them going. This is an event that Isabella and Jordanne do often for their friends. They will talk about a variety of topics including stand-up comedy pay hierarchy, diversity on stage, worst/best sketches, and changes they hope to see. This

will be accomplished by giving them talking points to bring up periodically during the dinner conversation, so the topics will be discussed in a conversation manner to appear organic to the audience. The answers will be strung throughout the film to add more voices/weight to Jordanne's answers. Cutting back and forth to the scene will also act as a metaphor that their electric community is the glue that holds them together through the challenges of the craft. After their friends leave, Jordanne and her roommate start to clean up and wash dishes. Jordanne crashes on the couch. These exhausted shots of them will be paired with voice overs of Jordanne talking about burnout and the exhaustion of her lifestyle.

### **Isabella's Interview**

Isabella's interview will also be shot in their apartment in her bedroom for a variety of background colours. Isabella will talk about how she met Jordanne at Humber college and first memories that she has of her in classes. She will talk about how they work on developing sketches together and support each other at shows. This scene will help paint the picture of her relationship with Jordanne and her shared ambition to make it in the industry.

### **Jordanne getting ready for show**

This scene will be of Jordanne putting on makeup in front of her mirror in her apartment while talking about her recent application for a comedy festival in Alberta. If she gets into the festival she will talk about her excitement to perform in her first festival. If she does not get accepted, she will discuss how she plans to improve and that rejections are normal in the industry. This will be another scene where she talks to the camera. The vlog style should help the doc appeal to the younger generation.

### **Toronto Tour with Jordanne**

In order to place Jordanne in the Toronto environment for viewers, we will capture b-roll shots of Jordanne taking the subway or streetcar and walking to work in the Kensington market. These shots will be used in the beginning of the film to establish to the audience where Jordanne lives and works. We will also capture some shots of Humber college where Jordanne graduated from to use as visuals when she talks about the school.

## Look Approach

### Interview Set-Ups:

For the interview shots, we want it to look very natural and cinematic. To achieve that look we are going to use minimal lighting equipment and film the interviews in Jordanne's apartment. This location will also highlight the intimacy of the film, and show a closer look at how Jordanne lives her life by showing the audience where she lives.

We are going to shoot the sit down interviews in an area of her apartment that has a window, so we can reflect that light using a large white reflector. That way the main light source will be natural. Depending on what is in Jordanne's apartment we can also put a lamp as a practical light in the background to create depth in the image. We are shooting with a 50 mm lens for these shots, this lens will also be great for taking as much light as possible. Therefore overall we will not need studio lights.

We are shooting on 50 mm lens on our camera because we want to create a shallow depth of field look. However, we don't want it to be too blurred in the background. We want to find a middle ground, so we don't distort reality too much but still achieve a film-like look.

For Ex. Too Shallow:



Desired Look:



We are going to have two main shots that we will be cutting between for the interview setups. They are a medium shot and close up, this will be good to have both so we can cut to the close up during more emotional parts of the interview. Both shots will have the subject looking off-screen, and will have them off to the side. This will be following the rules of lower thirds and making sure their eyes are in the center of the frame. This



framing will add authority to the footage because it will resemble other various and typical interview style shots, that are in every highly produced documentary. However, the setting and lighting will add the necessary intimacy and authenticity.

### **Comedy Show:**

We want this part of the documentary to capture a lot of raw emotions and building tensions since this is what we are starting and ending our film with. That look will be achieved by using light stabilizers and lots of movement to capture all of the activities taking place at this live event.

The lighting for this event will be left mostly up to the lights at the bar, which are mostly consistent with stage lights and small practical lights. However, for the interview shot at the end that we get with Jordanne we will bring a small LED light, to pop on top of the camera so we can see her face outside the venue at night. This lighting will obviously bring viewers into the location that we are shooting at and be very raw.

The shots that we are going to be getting are going to be close-ups and medium shots of Jordanne on stage performing her stand up routine. The audience will see these shots when she lands a particularly funny joke, or she is doing something that is very animated and visually appealing. Due to the constraints of the location and the nature of the event we will be using Gorilla Pods as stabilizers. This will allow us to be able to move easier to adapt to the live event, and will add an engaging handheld look to the scene without it appearing too shaky.



In addition to the shots of Jordanne performing, we will also shoot close-up shots of the crowd reacting. This will include people clapping, laughing, and shots of Jordanne's friends reacting to the performance. This will allow viewers to get an insight into what it is like to be a part of the late-night comedy culture. It will also allow us to cut up the performance seamlessly in post.

### **Jordanne's Day Footage (B- Roll):**

This footage will be used as b-roll to cut to during the interview with Jordanne, to visualize how she lives her life on a day to day basis. Since our film focuses on the

struggles of balancing finances and creativity our b-roll will complement these topics. This is also our opportunity to get more cinematic style footage.

Since most of these shots take place in public areas we will manipulate natural light with our lens choices and reflector. The shots inside Jordanne's apartment we plan to use the natural light from windows and use practical lights as accents. Much like the interview shots we will stay away from using studio lights to avoid an unauthentic vibe.

The b-roll will be made up of a variety of shots including close-ups, profile, medium and wide shots. Since these actions are staged in advance, we have the freedom to re-take shots and create action sequences with one camera, by getting Jordanne to complete the tasks multiple times. For example, we are going to have a sequence of Jordanne walking around her neighborhood that will include a series of close-ups, following from behind shots and wide shots that will cover the same fluid motion. This will be great for our editor to put together seamlessly and time with the music. These shots will mirror the ones found in narrative films. For that reason, we are also going to be using a low depth of field for the close-up shots to create a shallow cinematic look.

### **Jordanne's Work:**

The goal of this part of the documentary is to use it as a sequence to transition to when Jordanne talks about how she supports her side-hustle. In that way, this footage is meant to provide satisfying transitional montages and connect the audience with our overarching message.

We will be using the fluorescent and natural lights that come with the setting, in order to not disturb their business.

The camera angles in this part of the documentary are very similar to what we have planned for the b-roll footage because that is part of the way we are going to use this footage. Since Jordanne will be completing actions multiple times in order to work, we will be able to capture a series of shots from different angles that when edited together will appear as one seamless sequence. To match the aesthetic of the rest of the film the close-up shots will be shot with a shallow depth of field, and the emotions of Jordanne will be shown with close-ups. Even though she is working her side job in this part of the doc, showing how she feels will help us drive points home during the interviews.



**Dinner Party:**

Natural and practical lights will be used in this scene since this too will be shot in Jordanne's apartment.

Like the comedy show, this scene will be captured in a 'run and go' fashion because it is all we aren't sure who will be talking and when. To prepare for this, two cameras will be used. One will be set up as a wide shot and will be rolling for the entire conversation. The other camera we will use to capture close-ups/medium shots of whoever is talking. This (depending on location constraints) will either be balanced on a tripod and will move with a very loose pan arm, or will be captured using a gorilla pod stabilizer. This will be done in a very raw way much like capturing a live event.

**Archival Clips:**

Old childhood videos and photos of Jordanne and her parents will be used as engaging visuals when Jordanne discusses her family and passion for performance as a child.

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## **Creative Team**

### **Graham Beer - Producer**

Graham Beer is the Executive Producer and Host for Cobourg Media, a freelance journalist and is currently studying Media Production at the RTA School of Media at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ontario.

### **Kathleen Burgess - Writer / Director**

Kathleen Burgess is a photographer and aspiring creative director living in Toronto, Canada. She is currently studying Media Production at Ryerson University. She also has experience working as a Production Coordinator for animated series and producing/editing podcasts.

### **Maria Barr - Writer / Editor**

Maria Barr is a third year Media Production student at Ryerson University. Originally from Vancouver, British Columbia, Maria now lives in Toronto pursuing a career in media while balancing a part time job as a barista.

### **Audrey Crunkleton - Director of Photography**

Audrey Crunkleton is a videographer/editor who has a passion for storytelling through the video format. She also has experience with audio editing and producing radio content and podcasts.

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## **Transmedia Elements**

1. Instagram Advice Content from Jordanne
2. Comedy Community Podcast

### **Instagram Advice Content from Jordanne**

The film's Instagram account will be made as a way to interact with our Gen Z audience by posting additional content that isn't in the film while advertising the documentary. Followers will be able to interact with us by submitting advice questions weekly, via Instagram stories. Then Jordanne will come onto IGTV to answer their questions about the comedy scene, such as career advice and how she makes it as a creative in the city. This will be a great way to subtly advertise our documentary because it covers the main theme of the film which is surviving as a creative and is giving our audience a way to interact with this theme and gain interest.

When people make a connection with Jordanne by getting their question answered they will want to learn more about her by watching our doc. In the same way, Jordanne will be very lively and energetic in these segments and hopefully inspire some people watching which will also make them want to view our documentary. Our film will be advertised through posts on this Instagram account featuring funny clips from the documentary, and reaction gifs created by frames cut from the edit. Using social media to engage an audience can not be underestimated, so we plan on taking full advantage of this.

### **Comedy Community Podcast**

Podcasts are growing in popularity, and this can be seen by the audience of podcast listeners becoming younger, and the increase of creators online turning their youtube style content into podcasts. This can also be seen by looking at the subject of our documentary Jordanne, who runs a comedy podcast to give another way for her fans to experience her craft and give voices to other inspiring comedians. Since Jordanne's audience clearly enjoys listening to podcasts, we plan on taking this approach as well.

Our podcast will be centered around one of the concepts we hit on in our documentary, which is the sense of community and support within the Toronto comedy

scene. The feeling of friendship and support is something that everyone can relate to and makes people feel comforted among great challenges. Every week during our podcast a member of our creative team and Jordanne will interview a new member of the comedy scene in Toronto. This can include struggles comedians face, funny stories they have together and why they do what they love. Since this intimate conversation will be taking place, our audience will be able to hear major points that are hit on in the documentary and will leave them wanting more. Podcasts are only audio-based, therefore if listeners like this content, they may be craving to see a film covering it which would, in turn, lead them to our documentary.