

EPISODE 8
 DRAFT VERSION 2
 RUN TIME 41.20
 HOST Aimée Lindorff

GUESTS	Meg O’Connell	Co-creator
	Jackson Lapsley Scott	Producer
	Kurt Royan	Executive Producer
	Daniel Lake	Producer

Blurb: Hear from the production team of ABC’s pandemic comedy *Retrograde* as they talk about navigating a production across state lines, adapting workflows to support pandemic-safe processes, and how to produce, shoot and deliver a show in THREE MONTHS and stay friends at the end of it.

- *Retrograde*
- *Content*
- *Mythic Quest* - pandemic special
- *Lost in La Mancha*

Aimée	<p>Welcome to SQ On Air, presented by Screen Queensland - exploring the issues and news affecting the Queensland Screen Sector.</p> <p>I’m Aimee Lindorff and today we’re talking to the team behind ABC’s pandemic comedy <i>Retrograde</i>.</p> <p>Produced entirely online during the height of Australia’s social quarantine, <i>Retrograde</i> follows the lives of a group of thirty-something friends as they drown their sorrows at a virtual bar during the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p><i>Retrograde</i> is a six part series created by Mark O’Toole & Meg O’Connell and is directed by Natalie Bailey. It’s an Unless Pictures & Orange Entertainment Co production for the Australian National broadcaster, ABC</p> <p>I spoke to co-creator Meg O’Connell, Executive Producer Kurt Royan, and Producers Dan Lake and Jackson Lapsley Scoot prior to the season finale.</p>
	<p>Thank you all so much for joining us on SQ On Air and congratulations on <i>Retrograde</i>.</p>
Meg	<p>Thank you.</p>

Dan	Thank you so much
Aimée	It's such an exciting project, particularly during what has been a very interesting time in film and television in Australia. <i>Retrograde</i> is inspired by COVID-19 restrictions and the shutdown. Meg, do you want to tell us how the project actually started?
Meg	<p>Pretty early on in the piece, before there was a federal lockdown, Dan and I, a few of mine and I started to self-isolate in our separate cities. We needed each other to survive that. And so, Dan and I set up an online bar that we could drop in and out of, and it became like a real bar.</p> <p>You'd text in the WhatsApp group like, "Meet you at the bar," or, "Want to go to the bar?" Or you'd drop in, and people would already be there. And so, it became this virtual Cheers pretty quickly.</p>
Jackson	It was pretty popular.
Meg	It was really popular.
Meg	Dan, that first night, there were 30 or 40 people or something came through, I remember. Plus, it was an evening, and they would karaoke. And yeah, all sorts of shenanigans. We basically felt like that was a good location for something that could be made during COVID.
Aimée	Having worked on some experimental titles, specifically <i>Content</i> , which play with form and style and technology, did you find that helped frame the conception of <i>Retrograde</i> a little bit more?
Meg	<p>Yeah, 100%. I guess having made 90 minutes of TV for vertical but all screen life, Jackson and I felt pretty well-placed to make something that was set on a desktop. And I mean, working with the lead writer, Anna Barnes, who also wrote <i>Content</i> obviously helped tremendously with that. We knew what the limitations were.</p> <p>It's quite different. It was a very different form to making <i>Content</i>, but it did certainly open up our... Yeah, we knew what the problems might be I guess. Would you agree, Jackson? It was like we knew that we were heading into different territory.</p>
Jackson	The sort of problems you have to solve are a lot trickier, like the fact that any time you put a camera somewhere, the character has put a camera there. You don't have the director's vision. There's not this omnipotent idea of lensing it. And then, also, just the way you move through things. You have to move in realtime, because cuts or edits, there's no cutaways or establishing shots. And so, I think we are a little familiar with the way that this format gave you constraints, and then just

	<p>some of the ways that we can take advantage of that to tell interesting stories, but yeah, absolutely. As more crew came on board, as more writing was done and editing and testing, we found more ways to make it exciting than we had in content, as well.</p>
<p>Meg</p>	<p>it was a process of unlearning I think for a lot of people, just having to go, "Oh okay, this is not how it's usually done." Even though this is scripted and even though there are characters, there's a story, there's a narrative, yeah, it's actually a different way of operating. So the writers especially, I mean there'd often be a scene they would all get really excited about.</p> <p>And then, one of us would be like, "Sorry, actually how are we seeing this? Where exactly is this taking place? Why is Maddie at the bar for this scene?" And then, we're like, "Oh yeah, she can't be." So there just are constraints, even just because from her perspective, we're always on her desktop and we're always at this bar location. And so, she has to have a motivation for being there.</p> <p>And then, that runs through every stage of production. And so, as Kurt said, we were very much in development while scripting, while in production, while in post. And they all kept feeding back into one another, and there was just a lot of dialogue between all of those different departments and they informed each other.</p> <p>I think that's unique to a show like this, where you are really changing the script based on what's possible in post or changing something or the way that we're shooting something on set, because we suddenly realize, oh, that's actually not going to work for us once we get into the edit. And so, yeah, it was a very reflexive experience, I guess.</p>
<p>Dan</p>	<p>In short, every time a new script came out, we'd have a little bit of a breakdown. And-</p>
<p>Meg</p>	<p>We called it a pre-production meeting, but it was a breakdown meeting.</p>
<p>Dan</p>	<p>Yeah, exactly. People just go, "Okay," and then we'd either work out how to do it given all the parameters or we wouldn't. And I reckon most times, we got there. It was interesting for me being down here in Melbourne, and then everyone being up in Queensland. We'd have chats and I'd be like, "I don't know. I don't know if we can do that." And then, we'd find a way. I think that's a testament to the awesome team that we had working with us, that just were all a little bit insane by the end of it but in a good way.</p>
<p>Meg</p>	<p>Everyone was so involved in each other's worlds and departments. I mean, even for the actors, they got to have such an understanding of lighting and props, because sometimes they're rearranging those themselves. Even though we have someone watching for continuity, we've only got one person in their space often. And so, they're having to be more involved on set than they usually would be.</p>

	<p>We definitely learned a little bit from <i>Content</i>, and Charlotte Nicdao recently made an isolation episode of <i>Mythic Quest</i> and we chatted to her about it. And she was saying that she'd learned so much from <i>Content</i> that she ended up bringing it into that <i>Mythic Quest</i> episode. I mean, we were super interested to know how they did it.</p> <p>Jackson and Dan and Kurt and Xavier Muhlebach had set up this incredible technical system feat in order to shoot the show. It was pretty much exactly what they'd done over there, which was pretty exciting. To think you're on opposite sides of the world, and you're trying to solve this pretty difficult problem. So I think it was relaxing for us to know that others had come up with the same solutions that we had, that it was a pretty cool system.</p>
Aimée	You weren't alone in the struggle.
Meg	Yeah, exactly.
Aimée	It sounds like-. a really, really collaborative process. Did you find everyone was open to that?
ALL	Yes
Aimée	That was emphatic
Meg	That's how collaborative we are. We all say yes at the same time.
Meg	<p>Yeah, you have to be. I mean, I think we were pretty good at briefing people when they came onto the project. We had to be pretty upfront about how crazy the turnaround was and that the only way we'd be able to achieve what we set out to achieve was if everyone was pretty collaborative, hands-on, invested, cared about all the different departments. And it was a very collaborative experience.</p> <p>I think the actors certainly felt like they got to feed back on scripts and on production more than they usually would, and we had really long rehearsal processes with them where we would be making changes to the script right up until we were shooting it the next day. It was super collaborative. Post was really, really fun, everyone pitching in. I think that's how we like to work.</p>
Aimée	And wasn't it a remarkably quick turnaround? From what I understand, development in March, commissioned in April by the ABC and then premiered in July. So that's four months from commission to delivery. What were you thinking? Talk me through that process.
Dan	So I found the meeting, the meeting we had with the ABC, which was actually in the bar that Meg and I set up was on the 7th of April I think it was. And then, our first episode went to air on the 8th of July. So yeah, it was pretty nuts.

Aimée	So almost three months. That's quick.
Meg	<p>Yeah, it's remarkably quick. I mean, I will have to do some research, but I can't imagine people are doing it much quicker than that. Certainly, Content took three times the time to develop and make.</p> <p>I guess we were thinking that we wanted it to come out while it still felt... I mean, obviously we knew COVID, the pandemic, would take quite some time to resolve, but we wanted it to be relevant. We wanted lockdown to still feel like it was in people's recent memory. So we did feel like we were up against it, just in terms of relevancy. And just in the very early days of developing, we decided to set it back in March when lockdown first came in to timestamp it.</p> <p>And then, it was important to us that it came out as soon as possible after that. July was the first TX date. And then, we were shooting and editing and doing everything all at once, right up until the final episode aired.</p>
Aimée	As EP, Kurt, how was that workload for you?
Kurt	<p>I would probably say all-consuming. Yeah, not going to lie, it was pretty full-on, I mean a couple of things. Orange Entertainment, we are the new kid on the block. And so, for me personally, a lot of my exposure to production in my history really has been from the post perspective. And I just actually have to do a shout-out to all of the producers out there. I'm not even kidding.</p> <p>Almost every day of this production, which I know was unique, but almost every day I thought to myself, "Why would anybody be a producer?", because it was just pretty hectic. So look, it was full-on, but I think we knew we were making something special, and that was really one of the big driving forces behind this show, as well. And of course, we like a challenge as well, and it was challenging.</p> <p>I will say as well, just from the post perspective, from the post lounge's perspective, we've worked on a lot of crazy stuff in our time. I've never had a turnaround time like this, as well. We were shooting on a Tuesday or a Wednesday and delivering a completed episode through editorial, through grade, through sound the following Friday. It was absolutely crazy, but it was just an action-packed adrenaline ride. Very happy, very proud of the result.</p>
Jackson	And that's a show where there's graphic elements in every single second. It's not just cutting between mass edits, so intense.
Dan	Even getting the little things, like getting music cleared and that kind of stuff, was just such a rollercoaster, because you didn't really know what you were... apart from a couple of tracks that were in the scripts. And even then, that wasn't that far ahead of where they were being shot. So even that whole process, which normally

	<p>have time and negotiation time and all that kind of thing, and a shout-out to Tyler, our music supervisor. She's amazing, yeah. Even that was just...</p>
Jackson	<p>Yeah, we'd worked with Tyler-</p>
Dan	<p>It was happening so quickly.</p>
Jackson	<p>... Tyler McLoughlan on <i>Content</i>, as well. And she's great, Brisbane-based, with her company, The Sound Pound. And so, she's so good, but working as crazy hours as we were to turn around suggestions for songs and what's possible. And then, also us saying two days before we're shooting, "Hey, do you think we can have them dance along to this song?" And she's like, "Well, it's got to go to America and back, and then to the UK and back, before I can find that out," so doing calculations of timezones to see if that works.</p>
Aimée	<p>a lot of it was shot in locations that the actors could access on restrictions and under the shutdown. How was that process in terms of locking down locations, particularly when you've got characters going from London to Brisbane, and you're shooting across states, as well?</p>
Dan	<p>I'm actually sitting in "London" at the moment, because the location for Dylan's bedroom in London is actually my office in my home. Obviously, it was quite an interesting process down here in Melbourne during the shoot where we went through opening up to things getting a bit scarier to going to stage three to talks of stage four. We finished before stage four happened down here.</p> <p>There was one element of finding locations, and then there was the element of making sure those locations fit with the COVID safe plan and all those kind of things as well, and then just your general gut about making sure... It wouldn't be normal that a producer would be like, "Oh yeah, you can shoot in my house," but I felt really comfortable, because at least it's a place that you know, and you know who's been there and all that kind of thing, as well.</p> <p>We did have one, so one location, which it's the only outdoor location I think, We were literally blocking it out the day before we were supposed to shoot it, and the building manager of the place came and saw us and was like, "We're really sorry. You can't shoot here tomorrow," because someone obviously in the building of 300, 500 people, "Someone has tested positive for COVID, so we've got to shut down."</p>

	<p>So it was dealing with those things constantly. And obviously, we wouldn't shoot there because of that, but dealing with those kind of things that just popped up constantly that we had to... yeah, yeah. It was a roller coaster</p>
<p>Jackson</p>	<p>And that's just... having testament to just incredibly hardworking line producer, Caitlan Finch, and production manager, Francesca Hall, who also... They all doubled and tripled in their roles as location managers and scouts and all sorts of things, and were just doing incredible hours and workload to make all that possible, and understanding that, yeah, well, this is in this environment we're shooting and trying to create TV during a pandemic. Everyone's roles do change a bit, and we just have to roll with the punches and the patience of the whole crew in doing all that was just incredible.</p>
<p>Aimée</p>	<p>It's interesting to hear you talk about it, particularly with regular productions. These unforeseen circumstances always come up. Someone gets sick, can't shoot. Locations change all the time, but there seems to be that added pressure cooker of the pandemic around you with all this legislation that directly impacts your capacity to do a shoot, do the production generally.</p> <p>And it's great to hear that the cast and crew were able to pivot so nimbly across the shoot, which is really exciting to see. And you were talking, Meg, a little bit earlier about unlearning some of the processes. Do you think the things that you have learned during this production, you'll be able to take forward into future productions?</p>
<p>Meg</p>	<p>Yeah, I think so. I mean, in some ways, you're solving new problems, but it's often the root of it will be something that's common to all productions, like communication or the way that different departments effectively pass on information. Yeah, I mean, 100%. I guess we kept saying we'd never do anything like this again and caution others not to turn things around that fast, but there was something certainly about turning the creative around so quickly.</p> <p>As terrifying as the speed was, it meant that we weren't necessarily second-guessing a lot. We weren't doubting ourselves. We were just moving forward, and we had a lot of support from ABC to do that and I mean the funding bodies in general, including Screen Queensland and just trusting us. I think that gave us both a lesson around new production companies, and that gave us a lot of confidence, A, that we can move that quickly but, B, that sometimes moving that quickly is useful, because it means the normal barriers aren't there.</p> <p>We don't have time to worry about things you would normally worry about. So I would definitely take that onto the next projects, and I think also the overall collaborate, the way that we collaborated together and the feel of the show. I really appreciate group devising or where it feels like everyone is able to feed back into the final product, and I think we had that at every level.</p>

	<p>I think the other thing, I mean it's maybe not a lesson that you can necessarily carry on into the future, but something that made it possible for the speed to work was that everybody was experiencing lockdown and this pandemic as we were making it. So it meant that the production designer and wardrobe and everyone is going through what the characters are going through.</p> <p>And so, it felt like everyone had input, because they were experiencing similar things. And I think that certainly helped us make it feel authentic and real at every level. It also meant that it gave us compassion towards crew and to cast. We knew that this was a really tough time, and it's tough to make stuff in general but it's certainly a lot harder when people have personal issues or crises, or they're having to just deal with the myriad problems that come up facing 2020. So I guess, yeah, just having people that, I don't know, have similar experiences to the characters I think is useful and something I'd take onto other shows.</p>
<p>Aimée</p>	<p>Further to that, you've got some really massive themes that a lot of folks grapple with, that going into COVID and the pandemic and dealing with the shutdowns really put under the microscope. And I'm particularly interested in the ideas of the unemployment, the isolation, but also chronic illness.</p> <p>We don't often see people of this age group, of this demographic, depicted on screen with chronic illness and certainly not depicted as not a tragic B-story or a defining characteristic. Can you tell us a little bit about Sophie and how she was inspired and where she came from?</p>
<p>Meg</p>	<p>Anna Barnes, who's the lead writer on the show, she has dysautonomia. And so, I guess from the early days conceiving the show, we wanted to have a character who was living with a chronic illness, because it's just such an interesting time for people living with chronic illnesses, A, because they're in a lot more danger than others or more susceptible to COVID, but also they have experience in lockdown and in isolation, living in isolation.</p> <p>"Get over it. I've been doing this for years," and just to provide that straight person or that contrast for the others who are losing their minds and having these existential breakdowns, to have a character who was used to it and was not obsessed with productivity or not obsessed with what you're going to get done in your months of lockdown but was more grounded and settled.</p> <p>And I think coming at Sophie from that perspective is why she's so strong and funny and grounded. Early on, we wanted someone with a chronic illness to play Sophie. And Esther Hannaford lives with Crohn's disease and just immediately we just fell in love with her, and she completely got the character. I mean, it was just so funny and grew so much over the course of this series.</p> <p>And when she ends up having her drop-the-mic moment towards the end, I think we were all just like YES So yeah, I think that's how we came at the living with the chronic illness, but it's all Anna really. She's got such a great sense of humor, and she obviously understands the experience of Sophie so much. And so, it was just</p>

	<p>about leaning into the kinds of things that she's experienced and leaning away from what you hope people will be like.</p> <p>I think we had a few conversations, just about whether the characters would... how they would respond to her as friends. And often, I think we want to be our best selves, but the characters aren't always their best selves. And sometimes, they're going to be selfish or say things like, "Yay, lockdown's over," and not know that there's going to be ramifications for other characters.</p> <p>She just was very incredible at grounding us in reality. We all learned so much from that experience, and it really carried over onto set, as well. There was a scene where Esther as Sophie was doing charades, and it was quite a physical scene. And Esther said to Natalie and myself, "I think this would actually be really hard for Sophie. I think we need to have her say, 'That was exhausting' or something," which was wonderful feedback. And it just meant that that felt realistic and true to her character.</p>
<p>Jackson</p>	<p>One of the things that was very exciting about the show and the format was the ability, just how accessible it was in some respects, in the sense that people, a lot of our crew, could operate at least from home. The actors could stay at home and be seated and do that. There was just less physical involvement in some respects. And I think that that's a valuable thing to find in this form and something that is probably worthwhile going forward and to hold onto, knowing that you can make entertaining comedy that is relatively I would say cheap to make in the scheme of things, works as a format for people to understand and get to know characters and laugh at jokes, but also can be made sitting down in rooms. There's a lot of behind-the-scenes running around, but in terms of we can have actors with Crohn's disease partaking in it as fully as anyone else.</p> <p>We can have there be people on the crew with various disabilities or physical impairments because of the way it's shot. I think that's just something that I'd like the industry to know about and think about going forward as a way to get stuff done.</p>
<p>Dan</p>	<p>I think the relationship that Ramsay has with his mum and dealing with a sick mum is something that's obviously very close to me. I have a mum who is high-risk and is in Melbourne, as well. The connection I think between the 30-something generation and their parents is something that has been really... I think the curtain's been pulled back a little bit over lockdown and through this pandemic, and I think just generations in general if you look at different things.</p> <p>So I think that's a really interesting thing that was explored, as well. And I mean, I know it's one that everyone's talked about the fact that if we were to ever continue this story, there's so much more to Ramsay's story that I personally would love to see. And I know Meg and Anna have said that as well. The one thing I really connected with was the online shopping. Everyone I think in episode two was very... Because I've been out of control in that respect.</p>

<p>Jackson</p>	<p>The pandemic I guess really brought to material reality for a lot more people I think some of the themes that were maybe a bit more intellectual about the world. The things that we needed to understand other people were going through, we were suddenly going through ourselves. And yeah, one of those obviously is unemployment. In our sector in the arts, we've seen huge job losses and even career destructions in the live-events industry that are just incredibly... have a huge emotional toll but also economic and material toll.</p> <p>And I think the pandemic was a really interesting time for everyone to just both experience that or know people who experience that firsthand, and then also have the time to reflect on it and go, "Ah, this has actually been around for a while, and we've known about it but maybe had it at the back of our minds." And this goes for chronic illness and some of the other themes or moments that exist in the series as well, but it felt right and not necessarily preachy or too forward to make these a significant part of the show.</p> <p>It's like, "No, this is what people are reckoning with," both in what they're thinking about if they're not affected by it, but also a lot of people are being affected by it. And so, that just came into the show in a really natural way, and I think it's just an important part of the document of that time and hopefully helps inform how we get out of this and how we move forward.</p>
<p>Aimée</p>	<p>so half the production, the cast particularly being based in Victoria, a lot of the producers being based in Queensland, talk us through how you navigate production meetings and just how do you run a show when the whole cast and crew is spread across Australia?</p>
<p>Jackson</p>	<p>Well, I love a good system and spent a lot of time when this felt just like a twinkle in our eye in the earlier days trying to create systems with a small amount of producers, figuring out systems. We actually talked to some friends who work in activist and organizing spaces, and they tend to have really amazing systems for agreeing on things and talking through and making decisions.</p> <p>And so, we tried to bring some of those in, because they're quite successful and bring them into a Zoom context. So you're using some hand gestures and various ways of keeping communication open and fast. Obviously, once you then try to add a lot of people to that who are fresh to the system and we're onboarding 10 people a week in the crew, that gets a little messier.</p> <p>The spirit of it is if everyone just needs to be open for the fact that we're going to need to learn new ways to talk and to move through decision-making. And some things will be a lot slower, but some things will be a lot faster. And I think you saw that on set when sometimes things would get bottle-necked, because they're essentially one or two, we had two, voice platforms for people to communicate on.</p>

	<p>Sometimes, you'd just have to line up and I'll speak next, but then also at the same time, you've got the writer watching the Zoom call. So they can give you instant feedback, and there's not some long beleaguered process to get to that information. So the answer is lots of Zoom calls, lots of trying hard. And we had 10 different platforms that we all communicated on and had heaps of errors, but I think the spirit of it was good.</p>
Dan	<p>A really good text chart, that's the other thing. We have the producer's text chart, and literally I'd love to one day... It's such a weird thing, because normally you're having those conversations, but they're all documented in this because you're literally-</p>
Jackson	<p>Yeah, timestamped, yeah. Your lives are timestamped.</p>
Aimée	<p>You can do like a Man of La Mancha [<i>Lost in La Mancha</i>] style behind the scenes.</p>
Dan	<p>It's just a scrolling text chat.</p>
Meg	<p>It was an iterative process at every single stage, but I think production after the first day of shooting, we had a heads-of-department meeting. And everyone just was so good at going, "These are the problem areas. This is what we need to solve." And then, the next day, they were just solved. It was, I think pretty amazing to watch people just learn something so quickly, and I think most people on the crew would say it's one of the hardest things that they've worked on or that they learned more on this than they have on a bunch of recent shows, just because it was so different in every way.</p> <p>And so it's just a credit to the crew, but I think all the problems as they did come up were resolved. And really for us, I thought there'd be way more problems than there were, to be honest, especially you have a one-hour Zoom call and three people drop off, and you can't hear one person and someone's muted. You can't even get through a meeting without something going wrong. And yet, we were shooting long days, and you would have tech problems</p>
Dan	<p>It was quite fascinating. I think it was ep four, the NBN on the whole of the east coast of Australia went down. And we obviously had backup plans, because Xav, our tech director, knew what he was doing. So we had 4G modems set up, but because everyone was working from home and it was all corporate, they moved onto their Telstra phones and were using them. So all of the network slowed down, but somehow, we managed to solve it, and then I think that was one of the days where I'm like, "We're going to go so over," and then we didn't. It was quite amazing and testament to the awesome crew that just... yeah, yeah.</p>

Aimée	It sounds like the process was really challenging what you knew about your craft, but at the same time, everyone was really open to be challenged and really open to finding those solutions.
Jackson	<p>Yeah, I was just thinking how we each have little bits of exposures to the work that people are doing behind the scenes. And we know that when you have a particular role, you're doing work toward that role that people don't see, but there's also all of this work in figuring out how to transform it to the new medium and also the new way of making.</p> <p>And we saw just amazing innovation, not just in one area but in all sorts of areas where people would have to go, "Oh okay, I can't actually light that anywhere near the way I thought I could because of the limitations, and I'll go and figure that out." And the amount of stuff that we didn't see I'm sure is huge, just people being able to figure out new ways to get things done.</p>
Aimée	I do want to talk about the cast, because it is an incredible group of Australian performers. How do you cast a show during a pandemic, and how did you find these guys specifically? And I think it's a credit to the writing and to the acting, that these are people that you want to be friends with. It's such a personable warmth coming through the screen.
Meg	We had a bit of a wish list. We had an incredible casting agent who was working nonstop, Lou.
Dan	Lou, yeah. Lou Mitchell from Maura Fay.
Meg	<p>And so, between Natalie and Lou and us, we just went out to a bunch of people that we felt, exactly what you described, we would want to be friends with essentially and just felt like they were going to fill the role, because we knew that people might come for the format or the gimmick or the idea of an online bar, but they would only stay for the characters and for storylines that they're interested in.</p> <p>And it was just a process of talking a lot about what felt right and who was going to flesh out the character. And then, we just found this incredible bunch who just became friends so quickly and inadvertently. I think they met once before lockdown, before the lockdown restrictions in Melbourne increased, and I think they had a dinner or something.</p> <p>And then, that was it really. Everything else from then on in was over Zoom, the rehearsals, the read-throughs, shooting, everything of course, but it's interesting. I really do think you can develop strong relationships over a digital platform. I mean,</p>

	<p>Anna and I joked that everybody thinks this is the first time video chats been popular, but we've been developing stuff together over video for years.</p> <p>It's definitely a way you can collaborate and a way you can make friends and be creative and make art.</p> <p>Obviously, Pallavi and Max, we had to try and develop their relationship on screen, and it was quite hard.</p> <p>It was much easier of course to have actors, to have the characters at the bar to show the intimacy that they had. Whereas it was the opposite of a normal TV show, I guess. For us, it was actually much harder to show Maddie and Rob's relationship, because why would they be at the bar?</p> <p>The times that they're going to have that are where they're in their relationship are going to be when they're cooking dinner or doing something off-screen. So this was the space in front of the screen or the desktop is where the immediacy of the relationship really comes to the fore. So-</p>
<p>Aimée</p>	<p>Now that we've met these characters and love them, can we expect a season two?</p>
<p>Meg</p>	<p>Who knows? I mean, the writers and I have spoken about, and we all have chatted about, how much we love these characters. And Declan Fay and Michele Lee and Anna and Sophie and I, I mean, we feel like there's so much growth that these characters have much bigger stories that we'd love to tell, but it's just about whether you change the format. Do you stay in the bar? Do you go live action, or do you lean in? We're thinking about it, but we're-</p> <p>... recovering first. Yeah, we're decompressing first, and then we'll think about.</p> <p>What I realized before, we're talking about scripting. I guess what is unique about this project was that, A, the writers would be in all the rehearsals and then also be on set and be feeding back at any point with lines, but also we did these insane marathon punch-up sessions where we basically all come together, and just be going through the script and trying to make them as funny as possible.</p> <p>Everyone at every level on this project worked incredibly hard. I feel like it was fairly unique, the way that we ran the creative and the writers just all put so much of themselves into every script. Usually, you go away and you write your own, and there'll be some input from the director and the producers, but in this instance, it was everybody was very much mucked in on each other's work.</p> <p>So I hope that we get to do a season two, because I feel like they've all got journeys that are unfinished.. I think there's a long way for each of them to go. So fingers crossed for season two</p>
<p>Aimée</p>	<p>Thanks for listening to SQ On Air - you can watch season 1 of <i>Retrograde</i> now on ABC iview. Catch the latest news on the Screen Queensland website - screenqueensland.com.au</p>

