

# *Up in the* **SPOTLIGHT**



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# LOGLINE

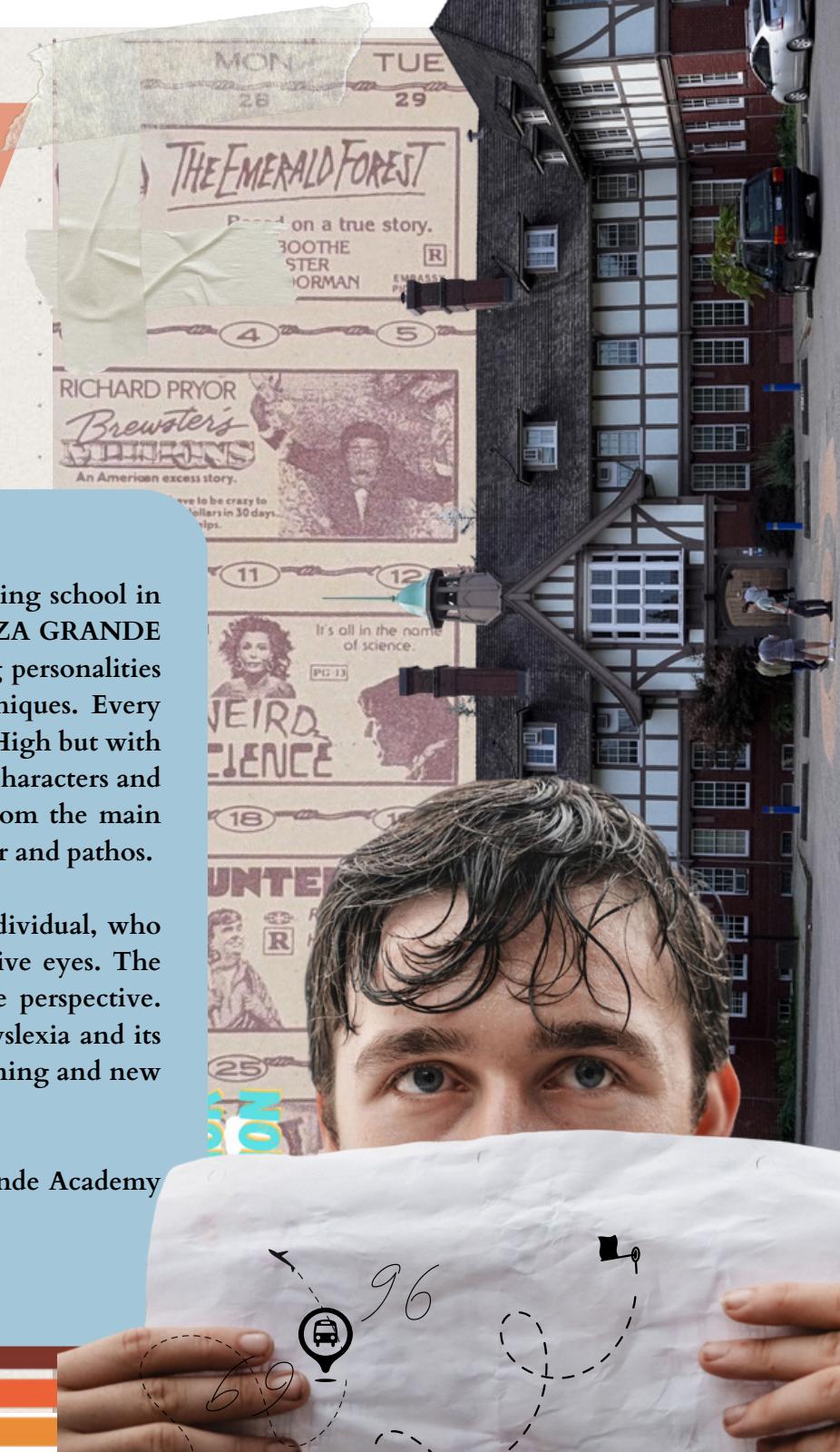
Quill, a young man with a difference and his unique perspective collides with the characters of the Izza Grande Acting Academy, a school struggling to survive and thrive despite its' own challenges.

## SERIES SYNOPSIS

The series revolves around the daily events within a small, tight, bare-bones acting school in Vancouver, BC, and its eclectic mix of eccentric students, staff, and teachers. IZZA GRANDE Academy is a unique school, more like a dysfunctional family, where the strong personalities of the teachers share their insights into life as much as teaching acting techniques. Every episode, in some way, is a coming-of-age story, drawing similarities to Degrassi High but with off-the-wall humor. It's a mix of Arrested Development in the quirkiness of the characters and their situations and Ted Lasso in its heartfelt perspective and analysis of life from the main character. "Up In The Spotlight" promises to be an eclectic blend of quirky humor and pathos.

The story unfolds through the eyes of Quill, a different kind of student and individual, who interprets the school's daily happenings through his imaginative mind and naive eyes. The audience is privy to his visualizations at times, drawing them into his unique perspective. However, at the forefront of Quill's experiences in acting school is his severe dyslexia and its associated challenges, including his struggles to hide it and its impact on his learning and new independent life in Vancouver.

Quill's transition from his sheltered childhood on Vancouver Island to Izza Grande Academy sparks personal growth, shaping his journey into adulthood.



# GENRE

T.V Comedy/Drama

## STORY STRUCTURE

The series starts with Quill's audition for the 50th class at Izza Grande Acting Academy. Each episode portrays a day in Quill's life and the school, introducing staff, teachers, and students, gradually revealing their backstories and challenges as relationships form and evolve.

## TONE

The communication between the characters is edgy but the vibe of the school, overall, is one of a chaotic mess with an inherent warmth. Physical comedy and improvisation play an integral role in the tone of the series, enhancing its comedic entertainment value.





## FORMAT

Eight Episodes - Half Hour each

## AUDIENCE

The series target audience is broad, including older teens, young and older adults, plus families with teens looking for an edgier comedy viewing experience. It's comedic take on life's challenges and heartwarming story lines will appeal to many. It will be attractive to those transitioning into the challenges of adulthood with the baggage of their childhood. It may be especially attractive to those having life experiences with learning disabilities and neurodiversity. The sitcom lightly covers issues of sexuality, mental health, and relationships of all kinds and can be a starting point for more in depth discussion.



Why is this series important in our present day? Up in the Spotlight shares the experiences of a person with invisible disabilities meeting new challenges. The creator, Atticus Cohen-Yelle, entered acting school with severe dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia.

His lively stories and musings were the inspiration and basis for the sitcom. However, because of his literacy challenges, he and his mom, formed a team approach to getting his ideas down in a script format, capturing his unique voice. As actors and other creative individuals are overrepresented in the population of dyslexia, 'Up In The Spotlight', is a story that will connect with all those who struggle to succeed within our world's focus on literacy.

We believe it is important that the challenges of invisible disabilities, like dyslexia, be better understood and embraced in our society and that aids (like writing partners) be respected to allow the unique voice and creativity of these individuals to be revealed and appreciated. Atticus was hesitant to have his name attached to the title of 'writer' for the series, as he felt that it would imply that he had achieved the traditional level of literacy. Perhaps, society needs to expand the title to those that are literate in other ways, as in the verbal storytellers of old.



# EPISODES

## EPISODE 1: Don't Rain on My Parade

The audience is introduced to Quill, a different sort of young man, whose curious nature compels him to connect to others. However, his hidden learning disability and his unique life perspective, make things more challenging when he tries to make acting his career. The audience is also introduced to Izza Grande Academy of Acting, a school struggling to survive, let alone thrive. A hair-raising audition experience leaves Quill and the audience wondering about his future.

## EPISODE 2: Getting to Know You

It's Orientation Day and the new students meet Sam, the school's Head of Acting. Warm and affable, yet scattered and forgetful, Sam welcomes the newest students to Izza Grande in a unique, somewhat alarming way. As the individual students and their origins are revealed, there are clues as to how the year might unfold.

## EPISODE 3: True Self

Quill's class is introduced to Han, the movement teacher. A rather unorthodox, gruff, self-appointed life mentor to the students, he believes movement of most any kind holds the key to everything. The class gets real personal along the way and Han's impact causes Quill to question and, be questioned, about his core identity.

## EPISODE 4: Oh Baby

Mac is back, and in a big way, teaching the class his action moves despite being hampered by his crutches. His secret goal to have a baby is revealed as is his secret past with Ms B. Quill finds himself confused by fight choreography and is in Craig's line of fire until Ruby jumps in to defend him.

## EPISODE 5: Life's Code

The class tries to find their animal essence and is introduced to a charming soft spoken teacher, Amore. However, Quill's disability is threatened to be exposed when the class takes on a writing task. He manages to keep it hidden while making a new friend of his teacher and learning a valuable life lesson along the way.

# EPISODES

## EPISODE 6: Reach for the Moon

Pepper finds herself in a big city situation, involving the police, which the class tries to solve. Han enters the scene to 'help out' passing on his philosophy of life to the students. Han and Sam's opposing styles with the Izza Grande students is revealed through a disagreement.

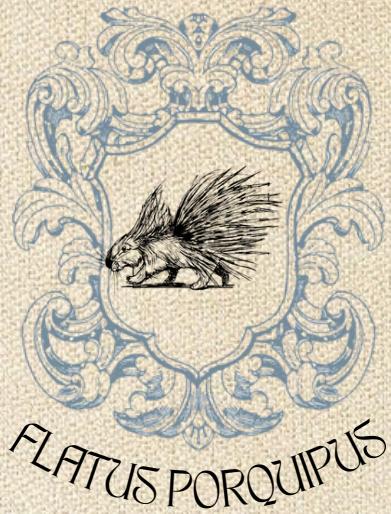
## EPISODE 7: Wink of an Eye

After Quill's close run in with a supposed 'movie star', the class and Sam ponder the meaning of fame. The class members learn what it feels like to grow old and Quill finds himself the owner of a special new tie. Through a confrontation with Craig, Sam reveals his deep rooted passion and connection to Izza Grande Acting Academy.

## EPISODE 8: We are Lost Together

It's the last day of class before summer break and things literally just shut down at the school, wreaking havoc. The unravelling of the mystery 'shut down' causes allegiances to form and secrets to be revealed. Quill, in his mind's eye, sees what he hopes for the future of his Acting school family, while the reality poses to be much different. What will the next year bring for the hopes and dreams of the acting students, staff and teachers of Izza Grande?





# YEARBOOK

## 2023

IZZA GRANDE  
ACTING ACADEMY



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

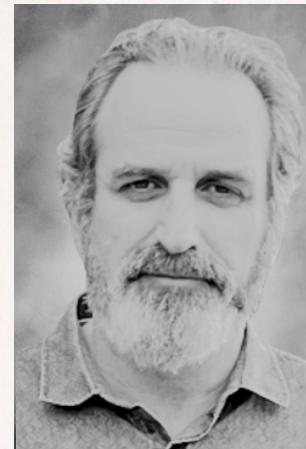
The Board members of Izza Grande Acting Academy would like to congratulate all involved in making this a successful year. As a team, you have succeeded in completing an inaugural episode in the life of the eclectic characters of 'Up In The Spotlight.' Quite the accomplishment under the most difficult of circumstances: Limited budget, Ongoing Strikes and the continuing overhang of COVID outbreaks. In that light, we want to stress to all concerned, the real importance of what you have done in participating in attempting to bring this sitcom to life. Many of you were interested in coming on board the project because of facing challenges yourselves, in school and life and were keen to show how hard surmounting these can be. We lift a glass to toast all of you in sharing your stories alongside Quill's !



ATTICUS COHEN-YELLE  
Creator\ Writer



MARIANNE YELLE  
Creator\Writer



TREVOR COHEN  
Executive Producer

# IZZA GRANDE ACTING ACADEMY



MS. B

“

Leaving the entertainment industry, at the pinnacle of my successful acting career, to take over at the helm at Izza Grande Acting Academy has proven to be one of my greatest challenges in life. The people....THE PEOPLE!

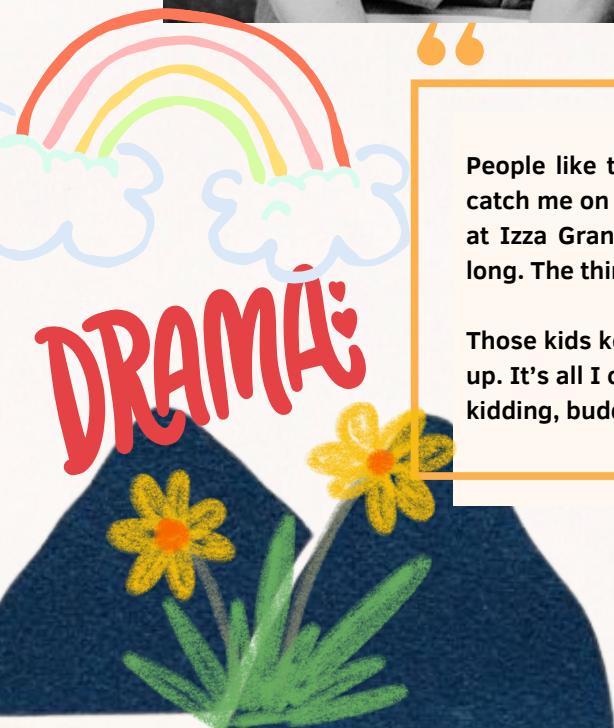
To call them, and the school over all, dysfunctional, might be called an overstatement. Or, it might not. All that aside, welcome to the circus of life at Izza Grande.

Howdy from Head of Acting

“

People like to say I'm friendly.. to all. And I guess I'm that. Just don't catch me on a Friday when we have to get out. And I mean, get out! Here at Izza Grande, we have a long tradition of being a family, maybe too long. The thing I love about Izza Grande is the kids - even the purple kids.

Those kids keep me going, keep me down and sometimes, even bring me up. It's all I can do to keep from bringing them home or killing them. Just kidding, buddies. You know I love ya.



SAM



“

# STUDENTS

## Ruby

A tough talking young woman who has seen it all in her young life. She dresses goth, hiding any feminine softness and hides behind her abrasive armour in class. She has a protective maternal side, though, especially to Quill. She stands up to Craig when he is haranguing him. She also has a controlling boyfriend that she doesn't seem able to leave.



## Poppy

Small town Island origins, bubbly and chatty young woman. Believes in conspiracy theories, ghosts, ufo's, spirits, etc. Believes she has telepathy and can hear what everyone is thinking which exhausts her listening to the other students chatter all day! Has a boyfriend who takes care of her but he doesn't really know who she is. Sees her destiny as predestined.



## Sly

A well built 20 some year old man. Laid back and casual, he is friendly and chats to classmates easily. He has come to the school accompanied by 'his friend', Craig. The details of their relationship, though, is somewhat confusing and hidden from his classmates. He often hangs back in the class, enjoying the 'entertainment' of the other students. He is always looking out for Craig though. His goal in life is to become an evangelist TV minister.

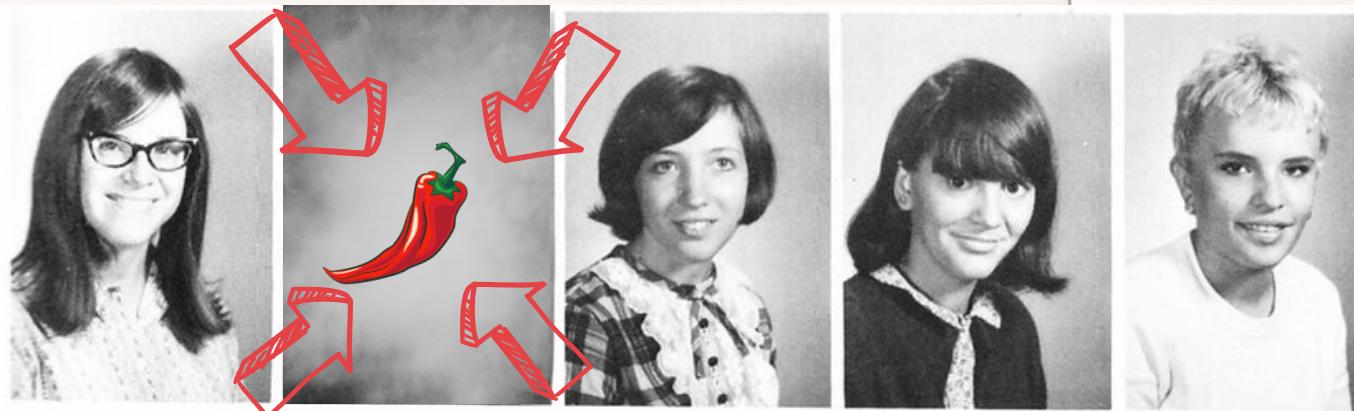


# STUDENTS



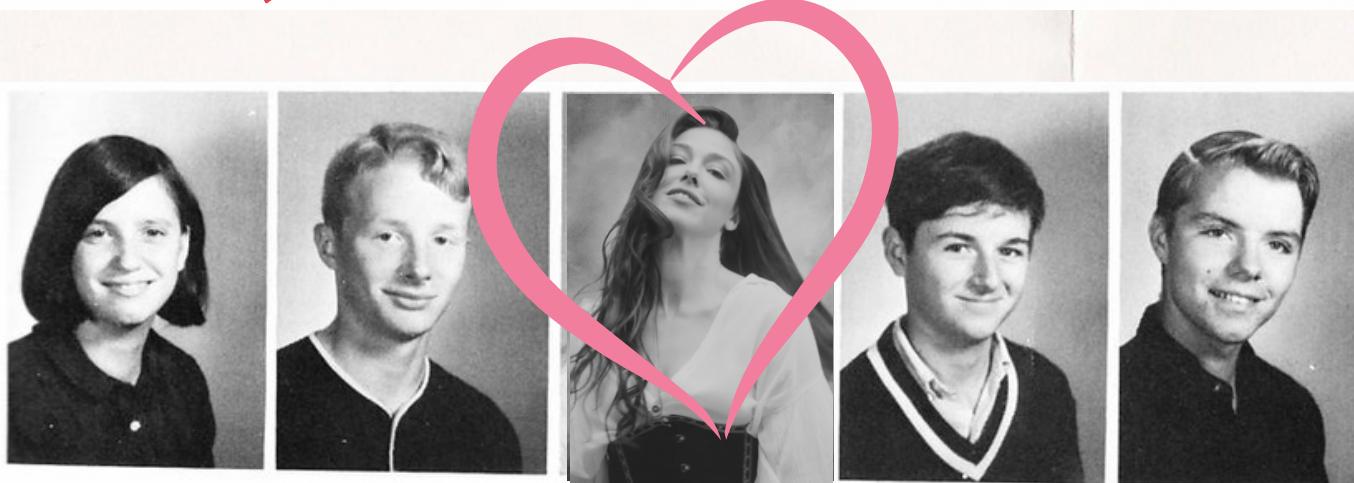
**Craig**

An interesting looking young man but not in 'classic handsome' way. Seems sour, bitter perhaps, on the edge of violence/anger below the surface. Has a hard edged personality; a no nonsense kind of guy who doesn't see the greys in life. Stays close to his friend, Sly, and is stand off-ish in class. Had an immediate dislike/aversion to Quill. And is not keen on acting class. He has been involved with gangs but is smarter than his life choices make him appear.



**Pepper**

People often forget her or mistake her for someone else. Dress and demeanour is somewhat butch and asexual.; Questions her sexuality. First time away from home, she is anxious about being in the big city, angry at her parents; and unconfident; Highly intelligent but stunted emotionally. Her parents expected her to accomplish great things and are disappointed that she has chosen acting. She would love to have a friend. (Not in 1st Episode)



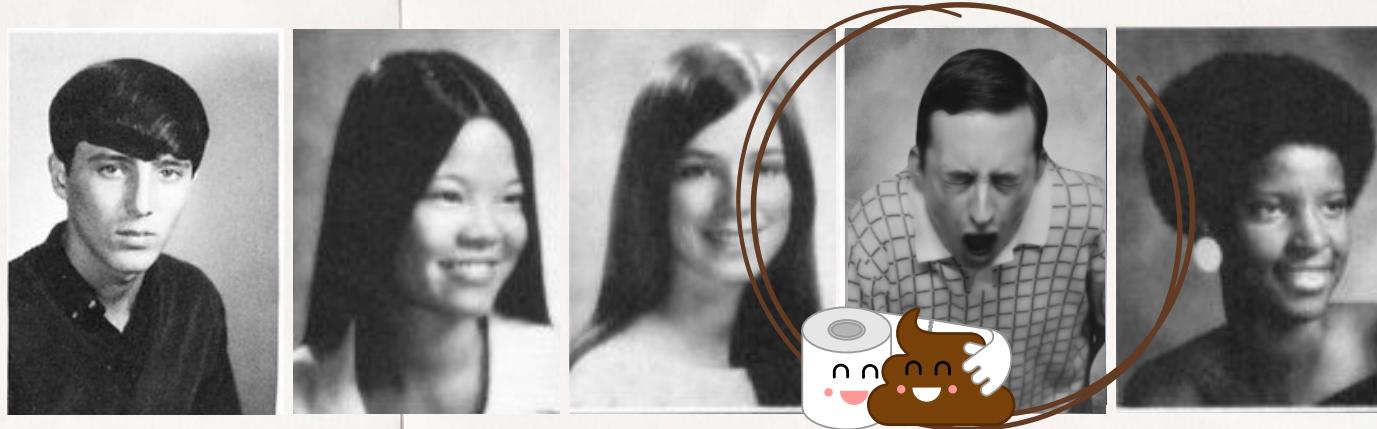
**Nikki**

Nikki is a 20-some female student already enrolled at Izza Grande when Quill first encounters her. She is a raven haired beauty and knows the power of her female presence and movements. The mere sight of her in the school can't help but pull Quill into a love trance.

# STUDENTS

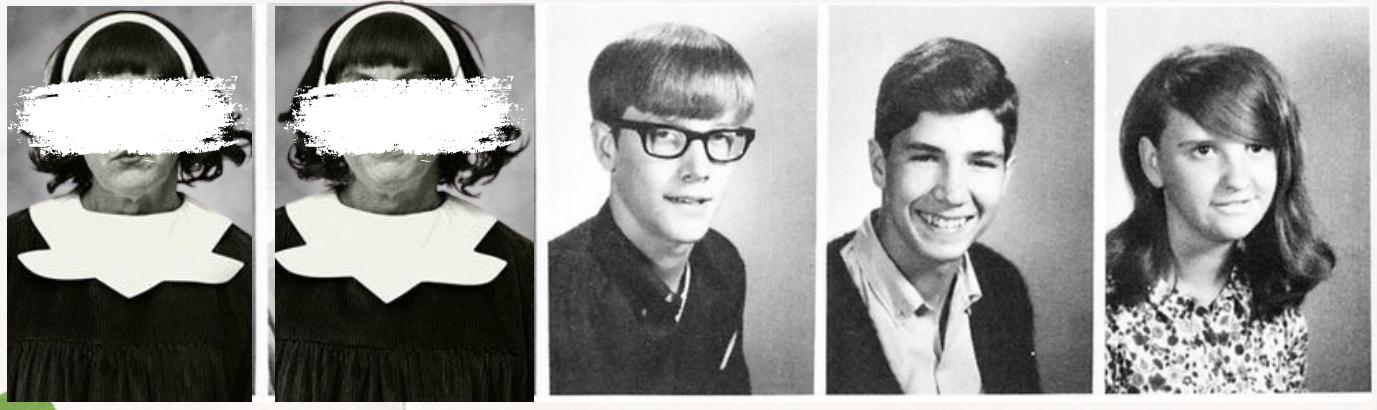
## Quinn

Quinn is a thin, wiry, quirky, student geek. Scheduled for his audition on the same day that Quill arrives at the school. His 'encounters' at the school prove to be alarming.

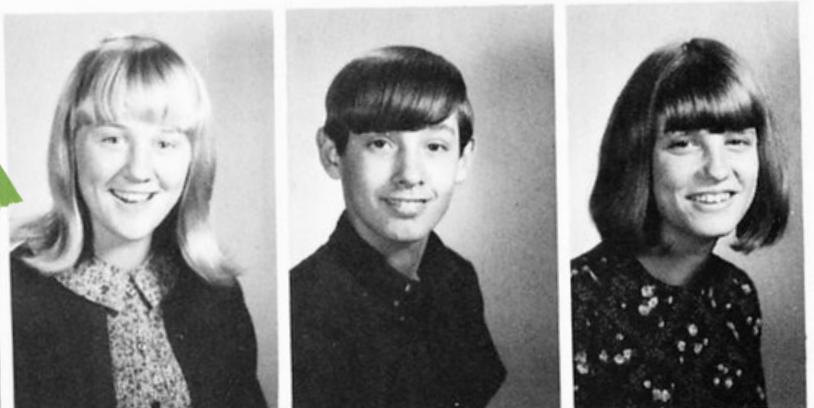


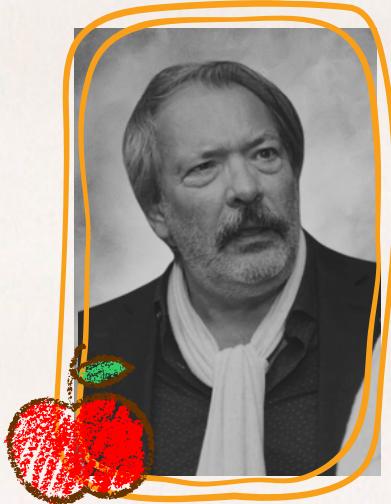
## Twins

The (much) older female twins have existed at the school for quite some time appearing to only a select few. Sam insists that classes clear out quickly on Fridays, to allow them 'free roam' of the school for the weekend. Libby has said they mess up her desk at times. All attempted photographs dissolve and their connection to the school remain a mystery.



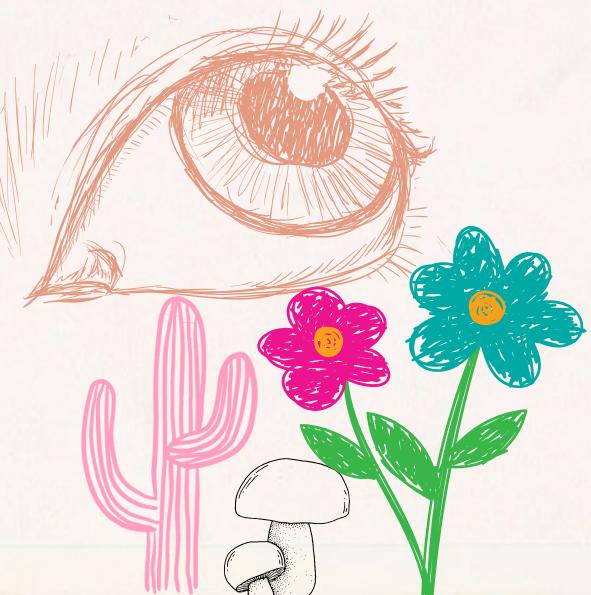
Quill, a unique Island boy in his early twenties, ventures to Vancouver for an acting career. With a vintage Hollywood style and deep cinema knowledge, he's a comedic observer with an expansive imagination. Despite dyslexia challenges, Quill's questioning nature and island upbringing add depth to his character in the school's chaotic world.





### Sam

Head of Acting at Izza Grande - 50 plus male, roundish, affable, soft spoken, with a warm energy. Scattered and a bit forgetful, often looking tired and a bit dishevelled. His Grandfather founded the school many years ago. By using his people skills, Sam tries to keep the place going. A serious acting teacher and, yet, philosophical. He thinks of the kid's souls .



# FACULTY



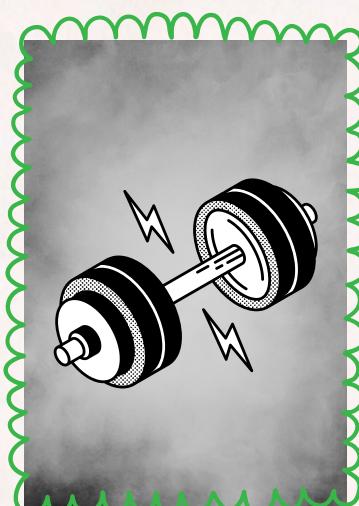
### Amore

Attractive, Asian woman, 30-40's who filled in for Han. She is a soft spoken, respectful, intuitive and gentle soul - the polar opposite of Han. She was previously a dancer and Han helped her after an injury to become an actor. She is indebted to him for that and, somewhat in love with Han. Quill feels he may be in love with her. (Not in 1st Episode)



### Mac

Was a successful action actor but was injured doing his own stunts. He feels insecure about his recovery and future. Uncertain what's his next step is in life and career, he is thinking about the possibility of a baby/wife? He had a relationship with Ms B. which they have tried to keep hidden but the relationship has taken a turn as she is frustrated by his drop in confidence. He empathizes somewhat with Quill as he's feeling a bit off balance in his life.



### Han

Asian (or other non-European ethnicity) upper 40's male. Han is a wild card at the school. He grew up tough on the streets and still carries that bravado around with him. He is smaller in stature but flaunts his muscles, always wearing a tank top, no matter the weather. He believes that the kids of Izza Grande would benefit with some toughening up so he passes on his 'street wisdom' to them. His kids play a central role in his life. (Not in 1st Episode)



# STAFF



**Libby**



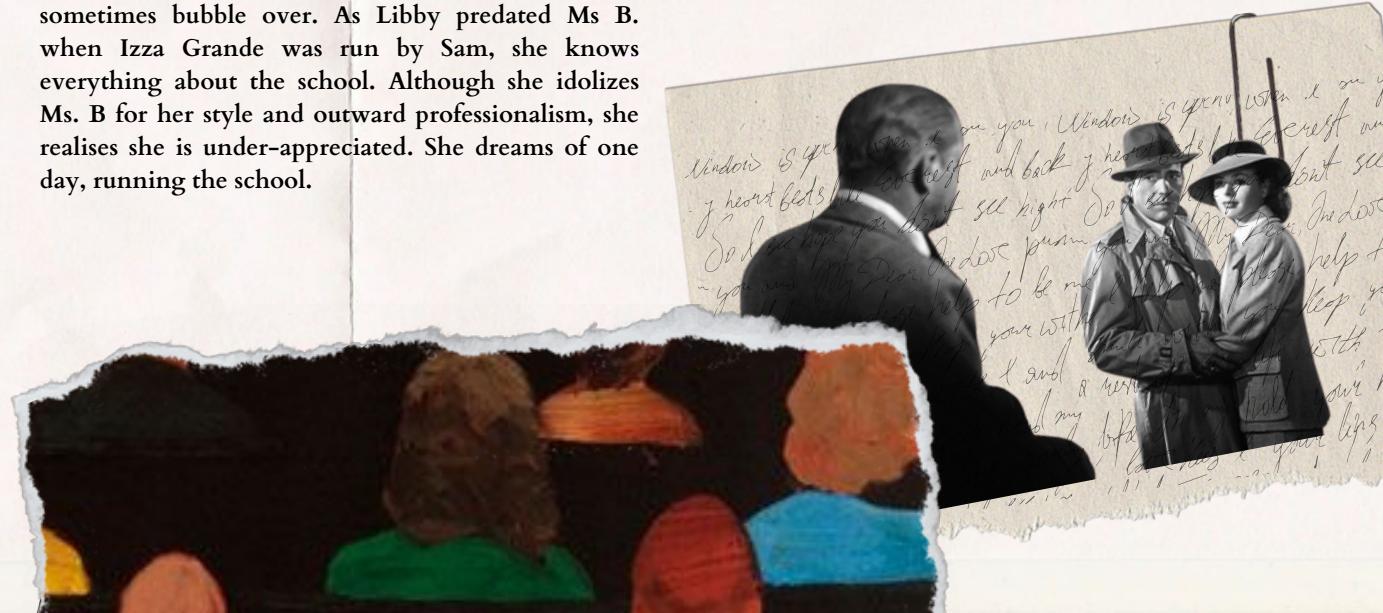
**MS. B**

Director of the school, tall, slim, well dressed 40's woman. She wants to make her mark in the business world by turning Izza Grande into a modern educational facility. She is a no-nonsense single woman and is as driven as she was in her previous modelling and acting careers. While she might understand the newest technological advances and financial models, she lacks the personal touch. She emits a definite air of authority.



**Leo**

20-some year old Latino male. With Sam's encouragement, Leo is working as a janitor at the school while trying to learn English and earn enough money to go to Acting school. A gentle, kind soul, he loves to listen in on the classes while he's working. (Not in 1st Episode)



# FIELD TRIP



We mobilized our resources to assemble a team of 80 crew members and 20 cast for the production of the pilot "Don't Rain On My Parade" by a multitude of talented artists.

# FIELD TRIP



# CHAPERONES



## Producer

### James Mattagne

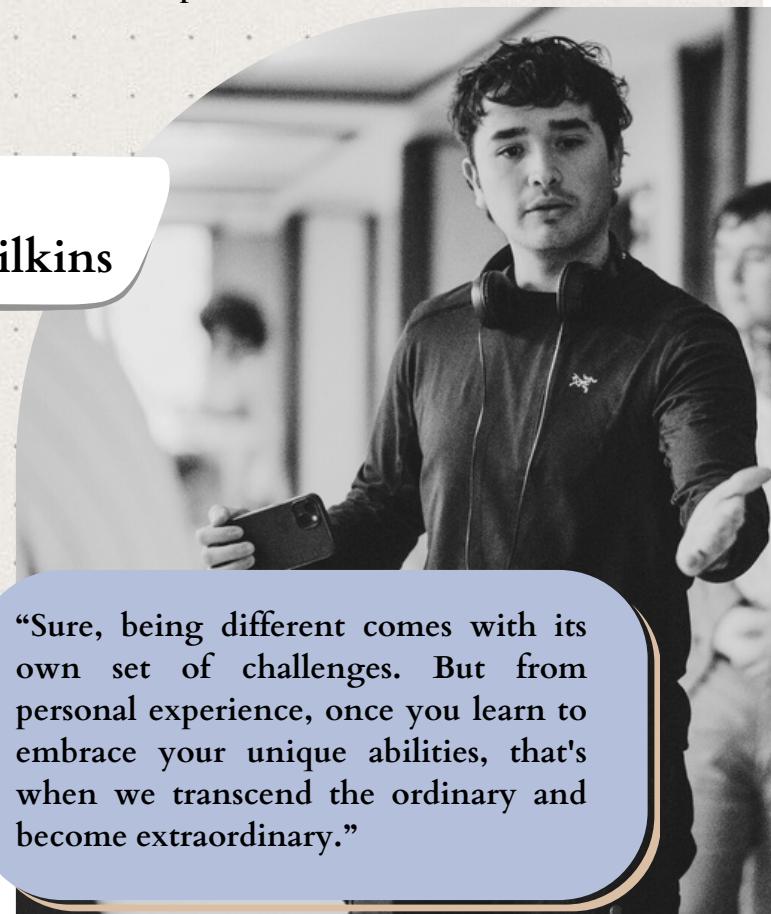
James Mattagne is an award-winning Belgian/British producer based in Vancouver, Canada. He has produced and worked in film, commercials, and music videos. As a producer, he's also known for his award-winning short films *POLYMORPHIA* and *THIS IS A PERIOD PIECE* that played in multiple film festivals locally and internationally. He's also done commercial work for Lamborghini Vancouver, McLaren Brussels, Champagne Laurent-Perrier, and more. His latest feature entitled "Lowlifes", will be released on Crave in April 2024.

## Director

### Sebastian Ortiz Wilkins

Sebastian Ortiz Wilkins, originally from Guadalajara, Mexico, has expanded his horizons by delving into writing and directing his own projects over time. A pivotal moment in his career occurred when he relocated to Vancouver, BC, evolving into a director and script supervisor within the industry.

His list of accomplishments includes receiving awards at the 2019 Mighty Asian Movie-Making Marathon and the 2019 Los Angeles Independent Short Film Festival. He notably served as a judge for The Berlin & Beyond Film Festival. In 2021, Sebastian was honored to be selected as one of the directors for the "Crazy 8s" Film Festival, showcasing his film "Cuello." Additionally, he has a degree at BCIT in Vancouver.



“Sure, being different comes with its own set of challenges. But from personal experience, once you learn to embrace your unique abilities, that's when we transcend the ordinary and become extraordinary.”

# EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES





*See you later...*

# STUDENTS

