Shadow Ban

Logline: Selling Shame - The rise of corporations as the new arbiters of morality.
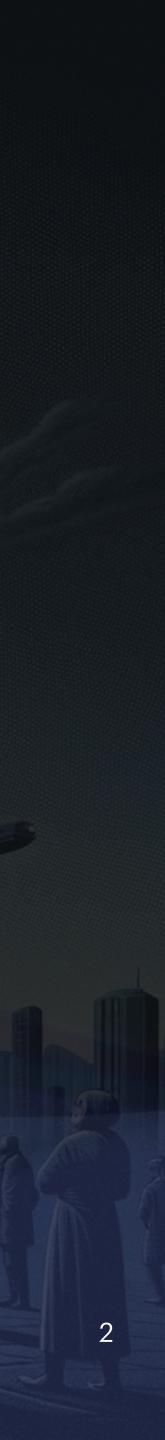
Synopsis

"Shadow Ban" is crafted as a compelling mystery series that delves into the shadowy influence of tech giants on public discourse, especially concerning sexuality and free expression.

Through the investigative lens of Max, a daring Queer+ filmmaker, the series peels back layers of digital secrecy to expose the practice of shadow banning and how faceless corporate entities are reshaping moral standards, once the domain of traditional institutions.

Each episode of this documentary incrementally uncovers the hidden mechanisms and anonymous figures manipulating what can be publicly discussed, urging viewers to critically assess the balance between freedom and censorship in our digital society. This intricately woven narrative not only explores deep-seated issues but also challenges the opaque forces setting these limits, inviting a thorough reevaluation of who should hold the power to control speech in the modern age.

Comparable programming

"The Social Dilemma" (2020) - This documentary film dives into the dangerous human impact of social networking, with tech experts sounding the alarm on their own creations. It particularly examines how tech companies manipulate user behavior to generate profit and influence public opinion, offering insights that resonate with the themes of control and censorship in "Shadow Ban."
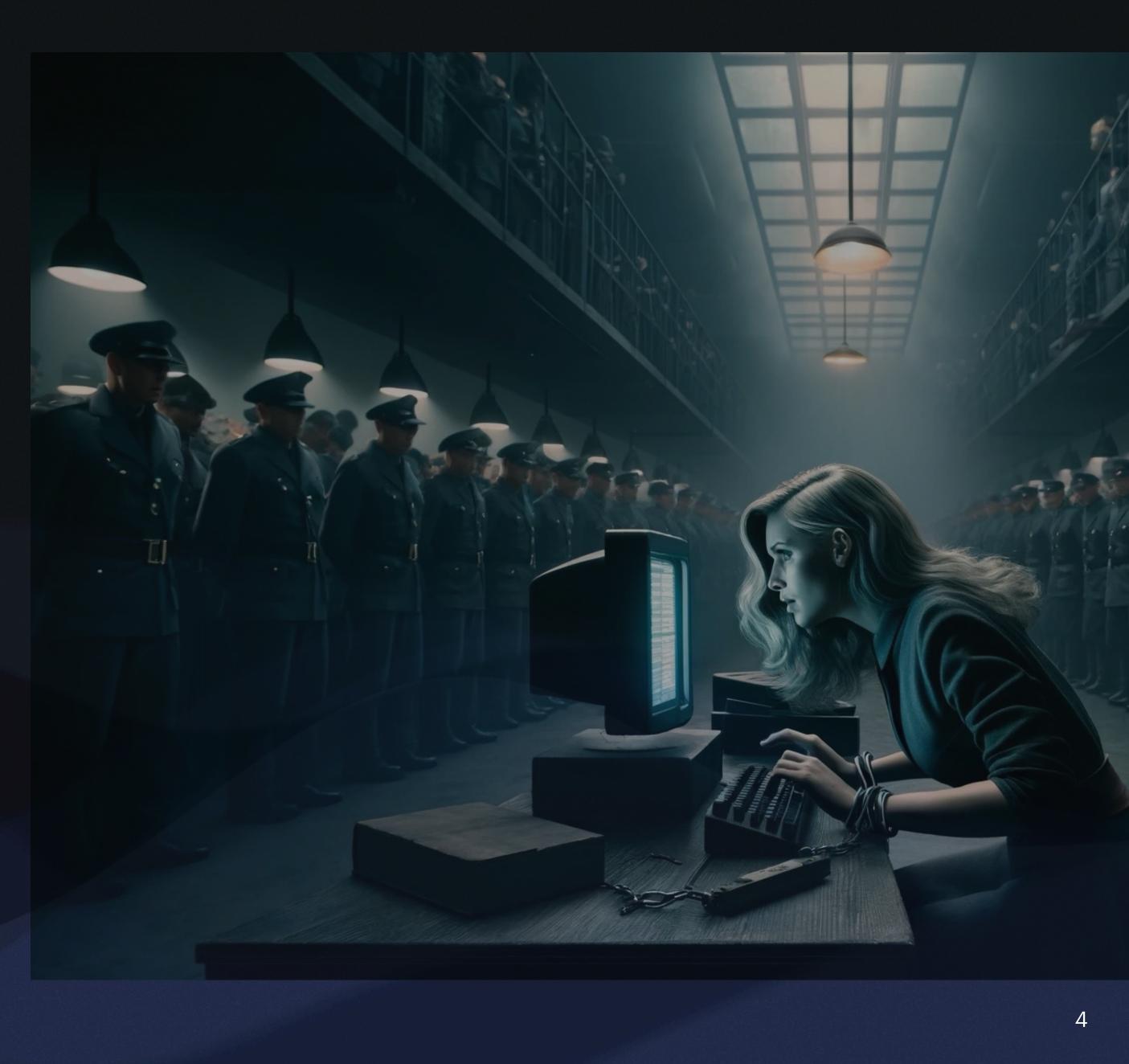
"Citizenfour" (2014) - Directed by Laura Poitras, this documentary covers the revelations of Edward Snowden about NSA's surveillance activities. It sheds light on government and corporate control over information, similar to the exploration of tech giants' influence in "Shadow Ban."

"Terms and Conditions May Apply" (2013) - This documentary investigates the life-altering terms hidden within the user agreements of major tech companies. It raises questions about privacy, consent, and corporate governance in digital spaces, echoing concerns about the boundaries of corporate power and public discourse in "Shadow Ban."

Objective

To investigate and expose the subtle yet profound influence of corporate power in shaping public discourse and private behavior, particularly around issues of sexual freedom and expression. The documentary aims to raise awareness and provoke dialogue about the balance between authority and individual freedoms in our increasingly digital society.

Episode 1: The New Moral Guardians

Synopsis: This episode introduces the alarming shift in moral authority from traditional institutions to major corporations and tech giants. It explores how these entities, under the guise of user protection, exert extensive control over public discourse on sensitive topics like sexuality and free expression.
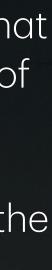
Mystery Element: The episode poses a compelling question: Who are the hidden figures orchestrating these moral dictates, and what are their real motives? As the narrative unfolds, it delves into the shadowy depths of corporate structures to identify the architects of digital censorship.

Investigative Approach: Utilizing expert interviews, whistleblower accounts, and detailed case studies, the documentary uncovers the secretive practices and ideologies driving corporate decisions. It examines how these policies are implemented across digital platforms, affecting millions globally.

Impact and Viewer Engagement: By revealing how these decisions shape societal norms and suppress diverse voices, the episode invites viewers to critically assess the legitimacy and implications of such corporate power in defining morality.

Call to Action: The episode ends by challenging viewers to demand greater transparency and accountability from these new moral guardians, setting the stage for a deeper investigation in subsequent episodes.

This focused narrative structure not only provides clear insights but also builds a sense of urgency and intrigue, encouraging viewers to continue watching the series.

Episode 2: The Silenced Voices

Synopsis: This episode explores the personal impact of shadow banning and digital censorship through the narratives of activists, artists, and everyday people advocating for sexual freedom and other marginalized topics. "The Silenced Voices" reveals the hidden repercussions of corporate dominance in public conversations, including the murky world of individuals behind the scenes who facilitate the unshadowing of banned individuals, profiting from these clandestine operations.

Mystery Element: As the narrative unfolds, it probes deeper into the reasons behind the silencing of these specific voices and who stands to gain from their suppression. The episode hints at a broader, hidden agenda controlling this extensive censorship.

Investigative Approach: Through personal interviews and emotional accounts, the documentary connects individual experiences to the larger frameworks of digital control. Each story is a vital piece of a more extensive puzzle, demonstrating the selective and strategic nature of censorship.

Impact and Viewer Engagement: By highlighting the human aspect of this digital issue, the episode makes a persuasive argument about the severe implications of these policies on freedom of expression. It draws viewers into the lives of those impacted, fostering greater empathy and a critical perspective on the motives behind censorship.

Developing Mystery: With each shared experience, patterns start to emerge, pointing to a calculated strategy aimed at shaping public discourse. The episode leaves viewers with pressing questions about the entities orchestrating these decisions, setting up a continued probe into the powers that govern digital speech.

This approach not only underscores the personal toll of shadow banning but also enhances the series' overarching mystery, urging viewers to follow the subsequent episodes for more revelations.

Episode 3: The Veil of Secrecy

Synopsis: This episode takes viewers inside the hidden corridors of major tech companies to explore the internal mechanisms and decisions that govern content moderation and user engagement. It reveals how opaque policies and complex algorithms are employed to discreetly manage what the public sees and discusses online.
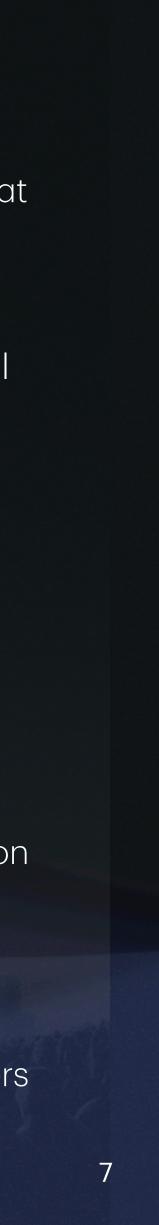
Mystery Element: As the episode progresses, a layer of mystery unfolds, raising questions about who exactly sets these policies and for what ultimate purpose. Insights from former employees, whistleblowers, and tech experts hint at a deeper, possibly hidden agenda behind the superficial goal of maintaining community standards.

Investigative Approach: The investigation deepens into the secretive nature of these algorithms and policies, seeking to understand how decisions are made and who is responsible for them. The episode scrutinizes the structures of power within tech companies, revealing a complex web of accountability that often leaves no clear trace of responsibility for decisions.

Impact and Viewer Engagement: By demonstrating the lack of transparency in these processes, the episode aims to make viewers question the integrity and fairness of the systems that control digital spaces. The use of expert testimonies and insider knowledge serves to underline the seriousness of the issue, engaging viewers on both an intellectual and emotional level.

Developing Mystery: The narrative builds as each testimony adds pieces to the puzzle, suggesting that the shadow banning and content moderation are not just random or purely algorithmic but part of a strategic effort governed by elusive figures or groups within these corporations. The episode leaves viewers pondering the real motivations and implications of such control, setting the stage for a deeper dive into the consequences of these actions in future episodes.

This approach not only exposes the secretive operations of tech companies but also thickens the plot of the documentary series, compelling viewers to continue seeking clarity about the hidden forces shaping our digital lives.

Episode 4: Culture and Commerce

Synopsis: This episode explores the intricate relationship between economic interests and cultural suppression, delving into how tech companies manipulate cultural discussions for financial gain. It investigates the motives behind promoting certain content while suppressing others, revealing the profound influence these decisions have on broader cultural shifts.

Mystery Element: As the episode unfolds, a central mystery emerges: Who benefits from controlling these cultural narratives, and what are the hidden agendas behind these financial motivations? This question leads to a deeper inquiry into the unseen forces and stakeholders who stand to gain from shaping public discourse in specific ways.

Investigative Approach: Utilizing a series of detailed case studies and expert commentary, the documentary peels back the layers of corporate strategies that link commerce directly to content control. The episode examines specific instances where economic gains are clearly aligned with cultural influence, uncovering the often obscured connections between profitability and cultural dominance.

Impact and Viewer Engagement: By highlighting how profit-driven priorities dictate what is culturally acceptable, the episode prompts viewers to critically assess the ethical implications of such practices. The narrative encourages a reevaluation of the role of tech companies in cultural formation and manipulation, fostering a deeper understanding and questioning among audiences.

Developing Mystery: Each case study contributes to a larger picture of systemic manipulation, suggesting a coordinated effort by powerful entities within the tech industry. The episode leaves viewers with lingering questions about the true extent and impact of these practices, setting up an ongoing investigation into how these influences affect society as a whole.

This approach not only exposes the intertwining of commerce and culture within the tech industry but also deepens the documentary's overarching narrative of mystery and discovery, urging viewers to look beyond the surface and question the status quo of digital culture shaping.

Episode 5: Reclaiming the Narrative

Synopsis: In this final episode, "Shadow Ban" shifts focus to the burgeoning resistance against the control exerted by tech companies over digital spaces. It highlights the efforts to reform how these corporations govern content, featuring inspiring stories from activists, insights from legal experts, and perspectives from policymakers working towards more democratic and transparent digital environments.

Mystery Resolution: As the narrative of resistance unfolds, the episode begins to uncover the identities and mechanisms of those responsible for digital censorship and cultural control. It reveals how concentrated corporate power has influenced public discourse and examines the broader consequences of this influence on society.

Investigative Approach: The documentary delves into the strategies and tactics employed by reformers to challenge the status quo. Through a series of interviews and case studies, it presents a roadmap of potential legal and policy changes aimed at dismantling the opaque structures that tech giants use to manage digital discourse.

Impact and Viewer Engagement: "Reclaiming the Narrative" aims to galvanize viewers, encouraging them to support or join the movement for change. It portrays a hopeful vision of the future, where the digital public square is inclusive and representative of diverse voices, rather than being dominated by a few powerful entities.

Call to Action: The episode serves as a call to action, urging viewers to participate in or support efforts to demand greater accountability and transparency from tech companies. It suggests practical steps individuals can take, such as advocating for specific legislation, supporting advocacy groups, or spreading awareness about the issues discussed.

This conclusive episode not only resolves the series' ongoing mystery but also empowers viewers by showing them how they can contribute to shaping a fairer digital landscape. It leaves the audience with a sense of possibility and a call to be part of a collective effort to reclaim the narrative in our digital world.

The Tone

In "Shadow Ban," the director seeks to establish an overall tone that is both investigative and contemplative.

The goal is to immerse viewers in the profound implications of digital censorship and corporate control over personal freedoms. By crafting a tone that balances urgency with reflective depth, the director aims to provoke critical thinking and dialogue among viewers. This approach ensures that the documentary not only informs but also deeply engages its audience, encouraging them to ponder the broader societal impacts of the issues presented. The visual and narrative elements are meticulously designed to complement this tone, blending striking visuals with compelling storytelling to resonate effectively with contemporary audiences.

The Look

A visually compelling Orwellian style is key to enhancing the narrative about digital secrecy and control.
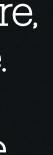
Color Palette: Opt for a base of dark blues, grays, and blacks to reflect the shadowy nature of digital censorship, complemented by strategic pops of bright red and electric blue to underscore critical insights and pivotal revelations.

Lighting and Composition: Use low-key lighting to create pronounced contrasts between light and dark, illustrating the hidden mechanisms of digital control. Frame compositions should include modern technology and minimalist architecture, emphasizing the sleek, cold efficiency of the digital landscape.

Camera Work: Employ static shots for interviews to emphasize the weight of personal stories, interspersed with dynamic camera movements like slow pans and handheld footage during investigative sequences to inject a sense of immediacy.

Graphics and Visual Effects: Incorporate clean, modern graphics and subtle visual effects to depict abstract concepts like data flows and algorithmic influence, ensuring these visuals blend seamlessly to support the documentary's themes without detracting from the content.

Considerations

Creating a documentary like "Shadow Ban," which delves into the complex themes of digital censorship and corporate control over morality, requires careful consideration across several key areas:

Research and Accuracy: Thorough research is crucial to ensure that the documentary provides an accurate and comprehensive view of the subject matter. This involves gathering data from reliable sources, interviewing experts, and possibly obtaining insider perspectives from individuals within the tech industry.

Ethical Considerations: Addressing sensitive topics such as digital censorship, privacy, and sexuality demands high ethical standards. The filmmakers must navigate these issues carefully, ensuring that the portrayal of individuals and organizations is fair and that the privacy of participants is respected.

Narrative Structure: Deciding how to structure the documentary is essential for maintaining viewer engagement and effectively conveying the message. This might include determining the flow between personal stories, expert analyses, and investigative findings, and how these elements are woven together to create a compelling narrative.

Visual Style and Tone: The visual style needs to align with the documentary's tone and themes. This includes choosing the right color palette, lighting, camera techniques, and editing styles that enhance the storytelling without overshadowing the content.

Audience Engagement: Considering the target audience and how to reach them is vital. This includes crafting content that resonates with viewers and planning distribution channels that maximize reach and impact, such as streaming services, film festivals, or television networks.

Legal Issues: Documentaries dealing with real organizations and their practices can face legal challenges, including defamation claims. Legal counsel should be involved to review the documentary's content and ensure that it complies with all applicable laws and regulations.

Funding and Budgeting: Securing adequate funding is necessary to cover the costs of production, from initial research to post-production. This often involves pitching to investors, applying for grants, or launching crowdfunding campaigns. Careful budget management ensures that funds are allocated efficiently, allowing for a high-quality production without financial overruns.

Impact and Follow-Up: Filmmakers must consider the potential impact of the documentary and plan for follow-up actions. This could include educational outreach, partnerships with advocacy groups, or creating discussion guides to help viewers engage with the issues more deeply.
By addressing these considerations, filmmakers can create a thoughtful, impactful documentary that not only brings important issues to light but also encourages meaningful dialogue and change.

Additional Elements 1/2

When undertaking a project like "Shadow Ban," which probes the complex interplay of digital censorship, corporate power, and societal norms, there are additional creative and strategic elements that filmmakers should consider to enhance the project's depth and reach:
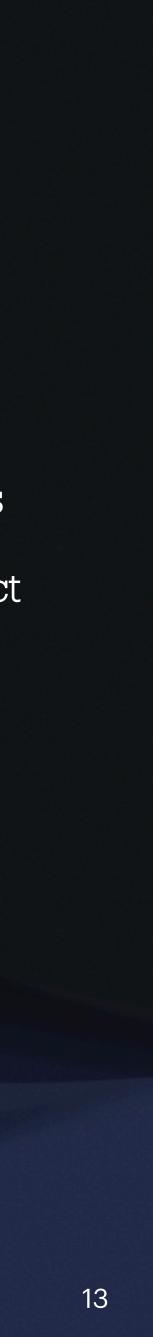
Interactivity and Viewer Engagement: Incorporating interactive elements, such as online platforms or mobile apps that allow viewers to explore additional content, engage in discussions, or participate in live Q&A sessions with experts, can extend the documentary's impact beyond the screen. This can transform passive viewers into active participants, fostering a deeper connection with the subject matter.

Cross-Media Content: Developing related content across various media formats—such as podcasts, blog posts, or social media campaigns—can complement the main narrative. This cross-media approach can help maintain audience interest and engagement between episodes or after the documentary's initial release, while also reaching wider audiences.

Community Outreach and Partnerships: Building partnerships with universities, libraries, and community centers to host screenings and discussions can greatly increase the documentary's educational impact. Collaborating with NGOs, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders who are directly affected by the issues of digital rights and censorship can also lend authenticity and urgency to the narrative.

Artistic Contributions: Engaging artists, musicians, and digital creators to contribute to the documentary can enrich its aesthetic appeal and emotional resonance. Art installations, musical scores tailored to the theme, or digital artworks can provide powerful, visceral experiences that complement the documentary's message.

Additional Elements 2/2

Longitudinal Elements: Considering the rapid evolution of digital technology and corporate practices, it might be worthwhile to plan for follow-up projects or updates to the original documentary. This could involve tracking developments in tech policy, following up with individuals featured in the documentary, or highlighting new case studies.

Educational Packages: Creating educational packages that include discussion guides, lesson plans, and resources for educators can expand the documentary's reach into schools and colleges. These resources can help integrate the documentary into curricula, sparking discussions about digital ethics, privacy, and corporate responsibility among younger audiences.

International Perspective: Given the global nature of the internet and digital corporations, incorporating perspectives from different countries can highlight the universal challenges and diverse responses related to digital censorship. This broadens the documentary's appeal and underscores the global stakes involved.

Archival Footage and Data Visualization: Utilizing archival footage and sophisticated data visualization techniques can help illustrate historical contexts and complex information in a more digestible and engaging way. These elements can anchor the documentary's narrative in concrete evidence and make abstract concepts more tangible.

By integrating these elements, the documentary project not only becomes richer and more comprehensive but also stands a better chance of influencing public opinion and policy regarding digital freedom and corporate governance.

Funding

Foundations and Grants: Seek grants from organizations like the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Ford Foundation, or Open Society Foundations, which support projects promoting digital rights and freedom of expression.

Crowdfunding: Utilize platforms like Kickstarter or Indiegogo to raise funds and engage a supportive community.

Nonprofit Partnerships: Collaborate with advocacy groups such as the ACLU or Access Now, which focus on free speech and digital privacy, to gain both credibility and funding.

SexTech Sponsorship: Approach tech companies like OnlyFans that value a free and open internet and could provide sponsorship and distribution support.

Academic Institutions: Partner with universities that have programs in media studies, technology law, or digital culture for funding and to enhance the documentary's research base.

Film and Media Grants: Apply for filmmaking grants from organizations like the Sundance Institute or the International Documentary Association, which support socially impactful projects.

Distribution Partners: Secure early funding and broad viewership by partnering with streaming services or broadcasters like Netflix, HBO, or public broadcasting services for exclusive distribution rights.

These options provide a range of potential funding sources, from grassroots support to institutional grants and partnerships, ensuring the documentary can effectively reach and impact its audience.
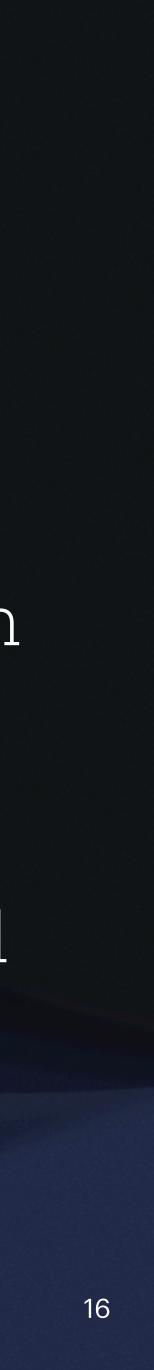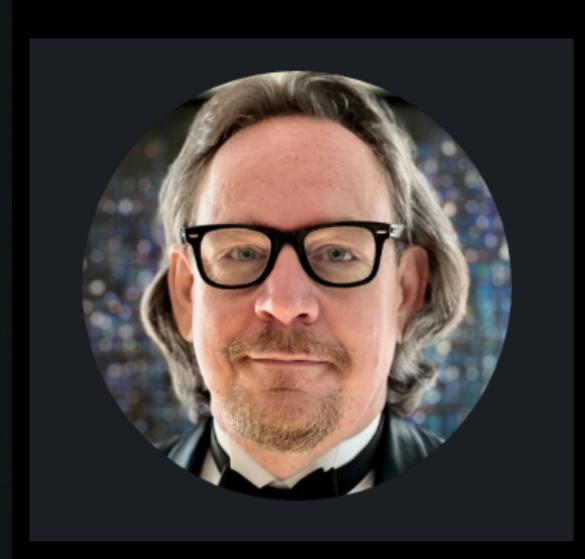
Marketing and Distribution

The marketing strategy will include social media campaigns, collaborations with influential bloggers and digital rights activists, and previews at major film festivals to build anticipation and engage a global audience. Distribution will aim for platforms like Netflix, HBO, and other networks known for deep-dive documentaries, ensuring a wide and diverse viewership.

This documentary series, "Shadow Ban," is poised to offer an unprecedented look at the complex interplay between digital authority and personal freedom, challenging viewers to question who really holds the power in the digital age.

The Team

Todd "Max" Carey

Producer / Director

Arie Van Damn

DOP

Shoshana Samole (Zisk)

Music Director / Legal

Stefan Chamberland

Sound Design

Todd "Max" Carey

A filmmaker with a background in social justice documentaries, the vision is to blend investigative journalism with compelling storytelling to engage and educate audiences. The director intends to highlight personal stories of censorship and suppression, framed within the broader analysis of societal shifts in moral authority, to create an emotionally resonant and intellectually stimulating series.

- Montreal, Quebec, Canada

- Occupation: Documentary Filmmaker

- Industry Focus: Digital Rights, Social Justice, Queer+ Advocacy

- Notable Projects: "tOuch Kink"

- Identity: Queer+

- Cultural Exposure: Lived and worked in 137 countries over the last 30 years, providing a broad and diverse cultural perspective.

- Personality Traits: Bold, unapologetic, innovative, deeply inquisitive.

- Interests: Advocating for social change, exploring unconventional ideas, challenging societal norms.

- Inspirational Quote: Inspired by Socrates' quote, "I know that I am intelligent because I know that I know nothing," embracing a philosophy of continual learning and questioning.

- Approach to Filmmaking: Uses film as a tool to challenge the status quo and inspire dialogue on underrepresented issues. Prefers to delve into complex, often controversial topics to provoke thought and instigate change.

- Vision for Current Project: With "Shadow Ban," Max aims to uncover and challenge the insidious practice of digital censorship by major corporations, highlighting its impact on public discourse and personal freedoms, particularly within the Queer+ community and other marginalized groups.

- Current Project: "Shadow Ban," an investigative documentary exploring the role of major corporations and payment processors in contemporary censorship and ethics arbitration.

- Objective: To shine a light on the gray areas of digital expression and push for transparency and fairness in how digital platforms manage content and users.

- Representation: David Webber david@tOuchKink.com

End / Shadow Ban

Direct Connect

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- Linktree: https://linktr.ee/sevenjourneys