

## 25. The Tommie Felon Show Episode 2

*Audience participation at its Best*

Before I reveal the guts of Episode Two an episode to beat all episodes—I would like to begin with a small apology, small because I am not really apologetic for having stretched the actual facts in my review of the pilot—dare I say truth, which we all know exists only in the mind of the main stream media that claims to own the truth, a big lie in itself—I could go on.

To get back to it. I apologize for having twisted a few small details. The Criminal was not killed, or if he was, he was brought back to life for this the second episode, the one that should have been full center of the pilot, in my unhumble opinion. You will see why shortly when I provide a blow by blow account of the second episode, which was shot in our Australian studio, because we had a contract with the major manufacturer of cricket balls in Australia to provide us with several hundred balls for the sole use in the show. Related companies also provided us with a score of cricket bats made of pure and resilient British willow, and dense plastic-like stumps that bounced when hit, and generally behaved in ways that wooden stumps would not. Their very sharp bottom metal-capped tips, however, proved to be of great stabbing potential, a detail that many discerning members of our studio audience will no doubt appreciate.

Because of the potential for misuse of these cricket paraphernalia, we found it necessary to vet our studio audience carefully. Each person was asked a series of questions to determine their suitability to be part of the audience participation. I say participation, this also is an understatement. We planned to engage the audience *en masse*, to give them a huge opportunity to (1) express their views of the overall presentation of the show and (2) take part in the actual interrogation or should we say, post interrogation part of the show when it became time to decide on the appropriate punishment for the criminal, and once decided, to

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apply the punishment.

Those who tuned into the pilot of the Tommie Felon Show already had the chance to assess the extent of guilt or innocence that applied to the criminal. And surely, his outrageous behavior towards our host and disrespect to our audience, contributed to his guilt. Indeed, the more he professed his innocence, the more guilty he became. I'm sure that those of you who tuned into the pilot or streamed it later on NetStyx would agree with that.

The vetting questions we asked our potential audience attendees were:

1. Are you black? (Yes, back row).
2. Are you a Christian? (Yes, disallowed entry)
3. Are you a Muslim? (Yes, back row with Blacks).
4. Have you ever killed someone? (Yes, special front row seat regardless of race or religion, given complimentary cricket bat).
5. How many people have you raped in the past ten years? (one or more, second row seat, regardless of race or religion, given complimentary cricket stump.)
6. Can you throw a cricket ball? (No, refused admittance.)
7. Have you ever had sex in public? (Yes, seated on the knees of front and second row attendees.
8. What does LGBTQ stand for? Must get four out of five letters right, otherwise denied entry.

Perhaps you are wondering whether I am on the level about our choice of Australia for the second episode. It's a long way from the cradle of civilization, and besides there is much more cricket paraphernalia available in India. The fact is, we chose Australia for entirely different reasons. Cricket was just a coincidental attraction. It came down to either New Zealand or Australia, so now I have given it away. We came to the conclusion that the Australians, specifically the Victorians were much more likely to appreciate our bombastic and freedom loving show, since the Victorians were well used to doing what they were told by their Premier during the corona virus lockdown of 2020, so we thought we could control our audience more easily. As well, there are plenty of terrorist-like refugees in Australia, living quietly in the suburbs, if not imprisoned on some island in

the pacific or somewhere else in the middle of the Australian desert. It was our considered assessment that if we could include as many of these individuals in our audience as we could, their pent-up violence would burst forth, if only given the opportunity by the outrageous behaviors of our star performers.

Finally, you may wonder what became of Tommie Felon, our great performer of the pilot episode. You will be shocked and excited to see him in his new role as terrorist par excellence, masquerading as a Yemeni refugee. He will preside over the entire show, the perfect character to sentence the guilty to their punishments, to prescribe the punishments deserved by the criminals who are lined up ready for our show as I speak.

And now to the show!

Well, not just yet. There is one more issue that I need to apprise you of. While we do like to surprise our audiences, we do not want to disappoint them. The criminals we have lined up for you are not your usual criminals. No, I take that back. They are common, everyday criminals, many of whom you will immediately recognize as people who might have been your neighbors. But be assured we have worked closely with the Victorian government officials to locate only those who were absolutely and beyond any measure of a doubt, guilty of their crimes and infractions. It will not be your role (if you are lucky enough to be in the studio audience) to pronounce guilt or innocence of the accused. That has already been decided by the legal apparatus of the Victorian Government. It is your role to decide on the punishment and once done, to see that it is carried out. To be clear. We fully agree with the Victorian Government that there is no relationship between the finding of guilt and the administration of punishment. The inherent truth of this claim is demonstrated by the following digression – no, not a digression, a necessary case study that clearly illustrates the Victorian Government’s absolute devotion to good punishment.

Young entrepreneur (actually, not an entrepreneur, but a Melbourne university student from Guandong province working his way through university), was convinced that in fact the evidence collected by surveillance companies was all that was needed to convict the criminal! As he liked to recite to his

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potential customers, “seeing is believing” (said with a distinctive and exaggerated Chinese accent so as to encourage his customers to correct his pronunciation and therefore feel superior to him), he would run through the many examples of drivers and pedestrians alike ignoring red lights, the technologies of face recognition and license plate recognition combined when needed, to identify within seconds, the name and address of the perpetrator.

“There, you see?” Ling Song would say with a big smile. “Absolute proof of guilt! You can catch these criminals and give them the punishment they deserve!”

At first his customers were a little doubtful. It seemed a little too close to home for some of them. For they too knew full well that they had probably run through a red light, or certainly an orange light, not to mention exceeded the speed limits (hidden and unhidden) at some time or other in their past.

Ling Song pushed his iPhone in front of his customer’s face. “You have big fines for these criminals?” he would ask with his big smile.

“We do. We rake in a lot of money,” would be the answer, said rather sheepishly. “That’s the trouble. We get criticized for not being serious about it. That all we are doing is making money and we don’t really care about the infraction itself.”

“Why not other punishment then?” asks Ling Song.

“It costs money to punish criminals,” comes the answer.

“Why not punish the worst offenders with something else?”

“Like what?”

Ling Song always shrugs and says, “I don’t know. I only sell cameras. You big boss, why not make up your own punishments?”

“Like what?”

Ling Song smiles and shrugs. “You like the cameras? We give you special price and free installation. Charge only for data link to facial recognition and licensing.”

“And how much would that be?”

“Only one cent per infraction. Very cheap! And with your money you buy more punishments to use for serial offenders.”

The deal was struck and the Victorian Department of Health and Criminal Justice Services (the two ministries of Health and

Criminal Justice had been amalgamated into one during the Corona Virus pandemic) signed a contract with Healthy Cameras Pty. Ltd. to install cameras on every corner of every city, town and village in Victoria, and in addition, after considerable cajoling from the talented Ling Song, installation along all border entry points from its neighboring states New South Wales and South Australia. They were, of course, installed in every conceivable location in airports and train stations, as well as beaches around Australia to ensure that people swam between the flags. Thus, punishment was inevitable.

Now, back to the show.

Entrance to the show facility was set up like a turnstile entrance to a cricket match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The answers to the vetting questions were fed into a computer and immediately the green light that said "RIGHT" flashed if the participant was designated a criminal, and a red light that said "LEFT" if the participant was designated a punisher. Because the computer assumed that everyone had committed an offence at some time or other, the splitting of criminal from non-criminal was done randomly. Of course the participants did not know this, so some were very surprised to find themselves back stage where the criminals were caged. Others, especially those who had answered in the affirmative that they had killed or raped someone were greatly surprised to find themselves in the front rows of the auditorium. Mind you, as I am sure you, my cynical reader have already surmised, it is very likely that some if not most respondents lied to the vetting questions. That is why the idea to randomly sort the participants to guilty (backstage) or not guilty (audience) made much more sense.

Once the audience was seated, the free popcorn distributed, and the criminals backstage sorted into dangerous and not dangerous, a final sorting of the audience was conducted. This was not so much sorting but organizing the audience into an effective and efficient assault force, to borrow a military expression. Our audience coach, a leading player in the AFLW (Australian Football Women's League), dressed in the tight shorts of a male footballer, called for silence and easily gained the rapt audience attention.

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“Welcome all!” she cries with a big smile, mesmerizing all with her bright overpainted red lips, “my name is Dolly and welcome, all, to this our second exciting episode of THE TOMMIE FELON SHOW, or possibly renamed, depending on what you, the all-important audience, wants, PUNISH OR BE PUNISHED!

[Screams of approval]

“We have now just one small matter to attend to before the great show begins. Thank you all for responding to our pre-show questionnaire. We now would like to know if there is anyone in the audience who has played cricket professionally or at the state or commonwealth level. Show of hands please!”

Three hands raised. The rest of the audience murmured their excited approval.

“Thank you,” said Dolly, “please come up to the front so I can give you your badges that mark you as leaders of your team, captains, let’s say, and give you the key to your store of balls, bats and stumps.”

The proud men came forward, shook hands with Dolly and received their keys.

“You may now select your team members,” says Dolly. Immediately, audience members call out, wave their hands, “Me! Me! Pick me!” they shout.

“You may give your team member whatever implement you think he or she or it can wield,” says Dolly in the loudest of voices.

Team members from the front two rows began to argue. Clearly the cricket bat was the favorite.

“All the weapons, I mean tools of punishment, are equally effective!” yells Dolly. “It’s a matter of how you use them!”

The captains issue the tools. The killers get cricket bats, the rapists get metal-tipped stumps, and the rest get cricket balls, as many as they can carry or pocket. Each captain, without any provocation by Dolly, begins to berate each other’s team. The competition is going to be fierce.

Back stage there is an unwelcome silence. To seasoned show business people, silence is not golden, when it comes to performance in an auditorium. It conveys an air of uncertainty, of

dissolution, of incompetence. Dead air, as they say in the live radio business. People began to whisper. Some were puzzled as to why they were sent back stage. They thought they were there to watch a show, to be in the audience. Not to be herded into small cage-like structures, basically cages on wheels. And upon being pushed into the cage, each participant was given a small card on which was inscribed their crime or crimes. It was when each criminal saw what they were charged with, that the silence gradually broke into low muttering, and then finally, nervous crying, some angrily denying their crime, others pleading to be forgiven, that they didn't mean to do it, and others flat out admitting guilt and saying "so what?" as if they had a right to commit a crime, to break the law. Of course, all, no matter what their first reaction to the crime of which they had been found guilty, complained that this was not fair, that many other, perhaps everyone, had committed the crime for which each was charged, so why weren't they here in the cages as well? How could any government claim that justice was done when it sorts people into guilty and not guilty on some unknown criterion, but that looked initially like it was random?

Now bedlam. People rattled the cages, screamed, sobbed, expressed their anger and guilt in all manner of ways. Some even stripped off all their clothes in defiance. Of course, to the producers of the show, this only served to make things even more entertaining. This episode would be a blockbuster, its streaming to be universally proclaimed, money would accumulate. What a winner!

Stage hands lined up the cages ready to wheel on stage.

And now the star of the show, Tommie Felon herself (it was a Monday) emerged from her dressing room. She was naked under the black flowing gown of a high court judge. No one would know that, of course, unless she for some reason, perhaps a spur of the moment act, had an urge to reveal her sensational body, scars and all.

You may remember that the criminal who featured in the pilot, and whom Tommie defended against all kinds of wrath and anger, was dragged off the stage in chains, never to be heard of again. You may wonder why he disappeared from the public

consciousness. The answer is very simple. He was paroled and became an ignominious nobody living under an assumed name in a back street of North Philadelphia where he was the victim of a gang shooting, when an errant bullet entered his small one room apartment and lodged in his temple behind the right eye. He lapses in and out of a coma where he resides in Temple University Hospital. Efforts were made to transport him to Australia for the special Australian episode, but the Victorian Department of Health and Criminal Justice Services required that he spend one year in quarantine, the explanation being that the Victorian government, indeed the Australian government, were not prepared to risk the importation of criminality into Australia which, as of this date, had the lowest criminality rate of any advanced country (and would be even lower were it not that the Australian government had allowed New Zealanders to migrate *en masse* without any vetting procedures at all). Besides, Australia had a very nasty history of criminal importation, indeed embarrassed that it owed its very existence to it.

I know I said that the notorious criminal of our first show would be in attendance, even a star of the show. But I said that just to get your attention. He definitely will not be in the show, thanks to the Australian government strict immigration policies. Besides, Tommie Felon threatened to quit if she had to perform on stage with that criminal again. She had enough scars on her body to last a lifetime. And there was a limit to which she could cover the scars with tattoos.

I could here revert to the script presentation of the show as it unfolded, but to be honest (if you can believe it) I thought, in retrospect, that the clumsy layout of the text in the script style I presented in the pilot episode detracted from the story I wanted to tell. It is easier and simpler to just tell you what happened. I was there (well, actually I wasn't, technically, I was safely viewing the show from the production booth across the street). But I didn't miss anything, in fact saw much more than if I had been there. We have cameras installed everywhere as you can guess. And when I say everywhere, I mean everywhere. Backstage, dressing rooms, all toilets, under audience seats, attached to participants' ID cards pinned to their lapels and other garm-



ents. Even the cricket paraphernalia have cameras attached to them in certain places.

I admit, though, that there is nothing like “being there” as they say. I miss being on the spot, issuing commands to Tommie, taking her by the hand, giving her a slap on the bottom to hurry her along. You know what I mean? When I’m there, she can’t ignore my commands. In fact, she typically discards the ear phones through which I convey my commands.

Here she comes. She’s hidden in one of the cages that the stage hands are pushing on to the stage. There’s a rustle of excitement in the audience. The captains must stand, cricket bats at the ready, and face their teams to keep them calm. It’s too soon to let them have it. If punishment is to be effective, timing is all important.

Tommie pushes open a door in her cage and jumps out. The criminals behind her try to follow, but she slams it shut, with the help of a burly stage hand. She gathers her judge’s robe around her body, sticks out one naked leg. There’s a huge audience applause and yells of excitement. The captains stand uncomfortably, shifting their weight from one leg to the other. They can’t hold their teams down much longer. Someone cries out, “Criminals! Filth! You’re going to get it!”

Tommie prances across the stage, all smiles. Then she tightens the robe around her, so tight her shapely form appears, exaggerated. Hisses and boos respond. They want action. They want all revealed. The captains frown. They raise their bats, now holding them over their shoulders.

The criminals rattle their cages. Stage hands appear from all over and hand them cricket balls. Tommie turns to face the cages.

“You have the right of a defense, do you not?” she asks everyone.

“Let them have it! Let them have it!” screams the angry audience.

One of the criminals manages to throw a cricket ball and it hits a captain on the back of his shoulder. He turns to face the stage. “Who did that?” he asks, deeply offended.

“What do you care?” calls Tommie, now prancing across the stage, leaning forward to the captain, extending her tattooed arm.

The captain takes the bait. He takes her hand in his and tries to climb up on the stage to join her. A security officer runs over and tries to grab him before he can climb up. “No audience on the stage!” he cries.

But it’s too late. The captain’s team is outraged that he has joined the other side. They begin to pelt the stage with cricket balls and stumps, and a couple with cricket bats rush forward and manage to bash his legs. Tommie pulls her hand away. Her work is done here!

“The innocent must have their say!” she cries, as though she were Moses with the tablets in hand.

The criminals rattle their cages again. They are flimsy cages. It will not be long before they can break out. Those who have cricket balls throw them. Their anger spreads like a huge tsunami throughout the entire auditorium.

The audience of innocents is now well organized. The errant captain has returned to his team and they have forgiven him for his misjudgment. He is easily the best bowler among them, and a pretty good batsman as well. They line up to take it in turns throwing their missiles. The captain points to vulnerable targets. But the other teams will have none of it. They are totally undisciplined. Throwing cricket balls, stumps all over the stage at no particular target, simply causing bedlam and fear on the stage. Tommie tries to fend off the balls, but it’s no use. A flying stump hits her right in the shoulder and stays lodged there, the metal tip stuck in her chest just above where one of her breasts used to be. The enraged criminals in their cages rattle them more, the violence sure to break them open. But they are hindered by the stump missiles that have turned out to be much more lethal than the hard cricket balls.

The third team under the leadership of their popular captain, follows him as he rushes forward with his cricket bat. He bashes the security guard who tries to stop him from climbing on the stage. He gets there easily and then turns to his team, “up boys and girls or whatever! Let’s get them and finish the job! They’ll be all out before they know it!”

Tommie rushes forward, trying to pull out the stump embedded in her chest. The esteemed captain grabs her by the

stump and with the other hand gives her a good bashing over the head with his bat. “Stop!” she pleads, “stop! I am innocent. I am just a media personality. I am innocent, I say.”

“You’re as guilty as the rest of them, and now you have to pay for it!” cries the captain of team three. “I’m more famous than you are anyway!”

His team is now on stage as is most of the audience. They rush this way and that, throwing balls and stumps, and the better cricketers swish their bats, pretending they are hitting fours and sixes. At last, one of the criminals manages to break out of a cage, and this is followed by screams of delight and delirium as other cages burst open.

Tommie manages to climb up on one of the empty cages and stands tall, She now has at least four stumps embedded in her body. She is pale and bleeding. She has touched her wounds with her fingers and painted her face with blood. It’s like her lipstick, always bright red. She raises her hands and calls out in a feeble, dying voice, “those who punish shall be punished! The innocent shall be guilty!”

None of what I have reported here is true. Here I sit serving my sentence of one year in quarantine because the Department of Health and Criminal Services of Victoria accused me of conspiracy to break COVID lockdown rules. They stopped me at the Tullamarine airport as I deplaned from the only Virgin flight into Melbourne from the UAE where I had been negotiating the season adoption of the Tommie Felon Show by the Lor-Renz Arabia TV network. I lied to the entry officials and said I hadn’t been to London. I don’t know how they found out. I am serving my sentence in an open cage put up in Melbourne’s Federation Square. There is a sign attached to the cage that reads “I broke the lockdown rules.” Every night on the network news, the Premier of Victoria delivers the verdict and shows me crouched in a corner of the cage. “I know this is painful for you all,” says the Premier, “but we can’t allow the lockdown to be broken. It takes just one who does not do the right thing, and the rest of us suffer.”

*Moral: Fairness and punishment are evil twins.*

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