



Julian Doucet

Words on page more important than all tomorrow's parties

By Cameron Archer

As an actor and voice-over artist, Julian Doucet's work ranges from performing Shakespeare to being the voice of the Ottawa transit system. A 2010 graduate of the CFC Bell Media Prime Time TV program and inaugural alumnus of the National Screen Institute's Movie Central Script to Screen program, Doucet created and wrote for Unis TV's first original series *St-Nickel* in 2016. Having joined Temple Street Productions' *Killjoys* in its second season as writer and script editor, Doucet returned for the third season as co-producer. He currently works on *Killjoys*' fourth and fifth seasons. *Killjoys* was recently renewed through its fifth and final season by Space (Bell Media) and Syfy (NBCUniversal).

Unis TV is a broadcaster entering the world of scripted programming. What issues did that pose for you as a screenwriter?

Unis TV was super excited to get into the scripting game and had a ton of support from sister broadcaster TV5 in Quebec. TV5 brought with it a wealth of scripted programming experience. Any challenges that arose revolved around agreeing on tone. Unis TV knew it wanted its programming to reflect the diversity of French-

speaking Canada, but a large chunk of its audience would be from Quebec. Reflecting French-speaking Canada is not the same as appealing to a Quebecois audience. Franco-Ontarians, Acadians or Franco-Manitobans may share a language with Quebec but are very different culturally.

How does working for a French-language broadcaster differ from working for an English-language broadcaster? Although Unis TV focuses on French Canadians outside of Quebec, and St-Nickel is set in Sudbury, the French-language industry in Canada is distinct from its English counterpart.

They're night and day. English Canada uses a showrunner-driven model whereas Quebec follows a director/auteur model. What's great is we're starting to see a little more of a melding between the two, as Quebec franchises get English adaptations and vice versa.

You've been with Killjoys since its second season. How did you deal with entering an established series, especially one with clear fan and broadcaster support?

How to deal with the best-case scenario ... is that a trick question? Sure, it can be intimidating coming into a hit show. You don't want to be

the one to mess it up! The challenge is to find the stories that help the show evolve and stay fresh without betraying its heart. The heart of the show is what brings the fans and earns the broadcasters' faith. You have to protect it. Luckily, there are six or seven other champions in the room with you.

How did you become established in screenwriting? What should the aspiring screenwriter expect when transitioning from another discipline to screenwriting?

I was an actor who started writing plays who stumbled into the CFC. The rest is a lot of flailing, anxiety, some lucky breaks and hard work. To the aspiring screenwriter I wish I could say there's a sure-fire path. Some of us hit it quick. Some of us are slow burners. Most of us are making it up as we go. Be patient, be persistent, and write — a lot. Push past perfectionism and put words on the page.

In the long run, knowing your voice will serve you better than sweating about parties and meetings. In fact, it will help with sweating at parties and meetings. Many of us transitioned from other disciplines. The good thing is, the perspective that the other disciplines bring is often what makes your writing compelling to broadcasters and producers. ■