1. How do your products represent social groups or issues?

Our film, 'The Switch-er-oo,' uses various conventions in order to represent different social groups and issues. Our film represents some issues which are commonly found in day to day life, especially those of a teenager, such as the characters that were portrayed in our film. My partner and I chose to handle the issue of bullying. We chose this issue as it is one of the most prevalent issues commonly seen in our generation. The term 'bullying' is defined as "the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power." We represented this issue by retelling the classic coming of age story of a nerd being bullied by a jock with our own personal twist. In our story, we were able to successfully represent bullying through various cinematic techniques. Some of these techniques include angles at different heights. For example, in one of the final scenes of our short film, we filmed Aidan speaking from a low angle. We chose to film him from a low angle because it shows a feeling of superiority and power over the nerd character. Similarly, in another one of our scenes also toward the end, we filmed Amelie (me) on the ground from a high angle. The combination of me being on the floor and the high angle show a feeling of meekness and fear in my character. In a day to day situation, the person who is doing the bullying is typically seen as superior and showing more power to the person being bullied. We chose to use high angles and low angles to show this representation. At the end of our film, we edited in the mental health hotline phone number as a tip for bullying awareness.

2. How do the elements of your production work together to create a sense of 'branding'?

Branding films is one of the most important concepts when it comes to marketing a product. Marketing assists a small business by promoting products or services to potential customers and attracting more people to what you are trying to communicate. In this case, marketing is defined by the viewer seeing any type of promotion or post regarding our film. The viewer could see our slogan, "no one wants to be like you," which is repetitively used within all of our social media accounts, our website, our postcard, and even in our short film itself which can draw in the audience member and catch their interest. In order to create a sense of branding, I began by researching the best ways to make a website and postcard that will captivate the audience as soon as they catch a glimpse. One of the websites I viewed said that a consistent slogan being used throughout every promotion was a great way to immediately captivate people and make our film memorable. Which is where I decided to pick out the line "no one wants to be like you," as it gives a very clear understanding of what our film is about as well as interest the audience to learn more about how that line originated and what it means. While making the postcard and the website, I decided to use the same pictures for both, as well as make it the profile picture on our social media accounts. I chose to do this because it also gives the short film a consistent look and does not let it look messy or disorganized. It also shows pieces of the film while not giving away too much of what it is going to look like. We also chose to name our film "The Switch-er-oo" instead of something more simple such as "The Switch" because we wanted to give the film a sort of 'kiddish' aesthetic and make it seem like it is just your average 'Freaky Friday' kind of film, especially so that the plot twist at the end is way less expectable.

3. How do your products engage with the audience?

While we were planning the creation of our film, one of our first team efforts was to confirm the different forms to appeal to our audience and create an interesting film as well as making it accessible and entertaining to audiences of all ages. We used multiple websites to assist us with planning our film as well as asked our friends for creative ideas that they would be interested in seeing if there was a new movie coming out in theaters. Because of us gathering information, it led us to creating a very interesting plot and make an interactive website as a way to lure viewers to click our links and scroll through our social media pages and even watch our short film on YouTube. For our different social media accounts, we decided to use TikTok and Instagram. We agreed on these apps because they are very popular nowadays, especially among teenagers and young adults. A very popular phenomenom on TikTok and even Instagram Reels is to post short clips of television series or movies and then not post the second part in order for the viewer to want to find out how it ends and goes to the streaming site itself to watch the movie or television show and find out the resolution. Since this generation is so chronically online, we are hoping that this is one way that we could possibly gain more viewers from social media apps.

4. How did your research inform your products and the way they use or challenge conventions?

My research process profoundly influenced the creation of our short film, website, postcard, and social media accounts and how they interacted with the established conventions for our genre of choice. Aidan and I began by watching countless amounts of comedic mysteries, such as ‘Scream’ and ‘Pulp Fiction,’ and identifying recurring tropes such as the nerd being bullied by the jock or the bully being in love with the nerd. We decided to go with the nerd being bullied by the jock because we found it much more interesting than the other options and easier to execute. We also watched a lot of anti-bullying videos as well as bullying awareness videos in order to get a better feel of how films regarding bullying and betrayal are supposed to flow. This was very helpful as we both were not too sure how to approach such a sensitive subject. Something else that really helped us with creating our film was the short anti-bullying clips that we are shown in school in order to prevent bullying. As useless as we typically think those videos are, they surprisingly helped us when it came to attempting to act similar to how a bully does. Our website and postcard were very strategically planned out to not give anything away about the plot twist that we had in store. We wanted both of these pieces as well as the social media account to simply reflect the fact that it may be an anti-bullying film and save the plot twist as a surprise once the viewer watches the short film as a whole. By strategically employing these elements, we aimed to create a comedic mystery experience that both challenged and honored genre conventions, allowing viewers to feel as if they are in the film themselves.