

SEARCHING FOR MARY IN THE MILLENNIAL WORLD

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BY

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## Introduction

In 1970, *Mary Tyler Moore* landed on the airwaves and transformed television sitcoms, moving the networks away from the *Father Knows Best* era of apron-clad housewives to reflect the rise of the working woman (Dow, 1996). Mary Tyler Moore was Mary Richards: charming, spunky, pretty, and--most importantly--thirty, single, career-driven and fully independent from the support of or definition by a man. Mary Tyler Moore's death in January of 2017 brought endless homages to the actress and show, including actress Candice Bergen, who declared on the *Today Show*:

*Mary Tyler Moore* really opened the door for women, for women not defined by a relationship, for women trying to have a career...and it also opened the door to quality television, because the writing was so exceptional and had such depth, and was character driven. And Mary was an icon unlike any other...I think *Mary Tyler Moore* really made women feel entitled to a career and to be defined without a man.” (NBC Today Show, 2017)

As a millennial born the same year Candice Bergen's *Murphy Brown* premiered (1988), I grew up in a television landscape where single working women were in abundance, far more a norm than exception. But as a first-time viewer of *Mary Tyler Moore* in 2017, it became clear that despite its almost 50 year age the show maintains its relevance; women are still navigating workplace sexism, independence, and pressure to settle into marriage. Also clear was the sense that Mary Richards was missing from today's television line-up.

For this creative project, I wrote a sitcom pilot driven by two of *Mary Tyler Moore*'s groundbreaking genre developments: the independent single working woman sitcom and the

workplace sitcom. The final piece takes into consideration what *Mary Tyler Moore* would look like as a millennial-driven comedy and is inspired by, but does not directly copy, *Mary Tyler Moore*. Instead of taking place in a news station, which has been utilized in many shows including the current *Great News*, it explores the dynamics of a woman working on a developer team within a larger full-service agency. This setting creates relevance as tales of Silicon Valley sexism continue to emerge in news cycles, including the “Google Bro” who crafted a 10 page manifesto asserting women are not cut out for a life in tech (Young, 2017). It also features a nod to the classic Mary-Rhoda-Phyllis triad, with the story bouncing between the main character’s workplace and home life relationships.

### **Review of Literature**

In developing this project it was important to understand the historical significance of *Mary Tyler Moore* and the single woman comedy that came both before and after the series. Long before Mary Tyler Moore delivered a groundbreaking performance as a single woman on the small screen, the working woman had captured audience--and studio--attention through a series of short and feature-length films in Hollywood’s earliest beginnings. The 1900s through the mid-1930s saw studios, armed with a flurry of female writers, focused on delivering entertainment to the growing demographic of working women. These working girl comedies featured single women navigating their lives, typically alongside a fellow single roommate. Brunovska Karnick (2007) further asserted that these stories showed a new force of women developing independence and an increasingly prominent public life, a reflection of the changing times granting women bouts of escape from the domestic before marriage. These stories, alongside those of the earlier slapstick and silent film era, often focus on and embrace the unruly

woman (Brunovska Karnick, 2007; Wagner, 2011). These women are capable of joking about men and utilizing physical comedy to express frustration during the occasional on-screen moments in which they were allowed to physically overpower their male co-stars (Brunovska Karnick, 2007).

The Great Depression, however, became an inhibiting factor for this comedic form. The female comedic duo and similar female-centered film comedies faded as the Great Depression wore on, and by 1935 its decline was imminent. Women were shifting back into the home pre-marriage as a means of coping with economic strife, successfully ending audiences' desire for continued working girl stories (Brunovska Karnick, 2007). The late 1930s and 1940s shifted to a romantic duo interest with the rise of screwball comedies and spirited female performers like Katharine Hepburn (Brunovska Karnick, 2007; Bingham, 2006). While female characters still maintained unruliness, these films removed the focus from independence and empowerment, transferring it to marriage (Bingham, 2006; Shumway, 1991). The characters traditionally began the film as audacious and strong but their arc included submission to the man in order for marriage to take place. This factor categorizes these films mainly as tales of conquest for the men (Shumway, 1991).

The post-war 1950s and 1960s triggered the movement from the unruly to prim and proper. In film, leading ladies like Doris Day presented clean, ladylike, virginal characteristics. Bingham (2006) noted that in Day's case, the character was also usually a woman fulfilled by her professional pursuits over those of marriage. For a brief period these roles offered some empowerment, especially to audiences, but the downfall of Day's career coincided with a shift of women being crafted as the object of comedy as opposed to its subject. Women were no longer

being asked to perform the joke; instead they were becoming the butt of the joke. This transition also coincided with the rise of television, particularly its female-heavy audience (Bingham, 2006; Press, 2009).

### *Television's First Females*

Television has long established itself “a central cultural role in the United States,” with the half-hour sitcom often reflecting--or sometimes establishing--cultural norms (Press, 2009, p. 148). This norm establishment is prevalent for female characters and the role of women in society, though television's first decades often struggled with a mix of reality and American idealism. The early 1950s featured an interesting mix for female roles. Some women, like Lucille Kallen, the sole female writer for Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows*, managed to find work behind the scenes (Henderson, 2011). Programming in the very beginning of the decade also had opportunity for more diverse portrayals, including shows featuring ethnically diverse families, like *The Goldbergs* (Press, 2009). The occasional working woman (*Our Miss Brooks*, *Private Secretary*) also entered the scene, though the shows tended to focus on characters' dedication to finding husbands (Dow, 1996). As the decade progressed, however, programming shifted to the white middle class family unit. Despite the focus on the family, comediennees like Lucille Ball and Gracie Allen were given opportunity to flourish in their roles as housewives while demonstrating angst against the domestic sphere (Press, 2009). Lucille Ball, for example, challenged the traditional by creating a fictionalized version of herself who demonstrated poor skill for her role as a wife and who engaged in gender-inappropriate behavior, such as dressing as a man. By foregoing the traditional delicateness and grace expected of women, she gave nod

to the unruly, slapstick female comedian of film's early roots (Brunovska Karnick, 1999; White, 2010; Carini, 2003).

This rebellion of the housewives, however, was diminished by the 1960s with the rise of comedies like *The Donna Reed Show*, which focused on the mundane and wholesome. Inklings of independence disappeared on screen in favor of the sweet, feminine stay-at-home mother who could solve her family's simple problems in pearls. Unlike previous eras, this shift went opposite of current trends in the United States, which saw a large increase in women entering the workforce (Press, 2009). Only a few shows during the decade dared to reflect this societal shift, most notably *Julia* and *That Girl*. Both failed to create a feminist statement, with *Julia* becoming more discussed for race due to its black female lead. While *That Girl's* lead lived on her own to pursue acting, she was still well within the safety net of her father and boyfriend, her stint as an independent woman a fling before she walked down the aisle (Dow, 1996). The societal shift of the women in the workforce, however, made the stage ripe for the entrance of a sophisticated working woman as a key player on the small screen.

#### *Mary Tyler Moore Tosses Her Hat Into the Ring*

The 1970 premiere of *Mary Tyler Moore* signaled a change from the home-based sitcom, creating a standard for the ensemble workplace comedy. It also garnered a position as a standard for the single working woman portrayal. Dow (1996) explained that the show was "the first to assert that work was not just a prelude to marriage, or a substitute for it, but could form the center of a satisfying life for a woman in the way it presumably did for men" (p. 24). The character of Mary Richards was developed by creators James L. Brooks and Allan Burns to be "unapologetic about her age, about being single, and about her independence," an attempt to

“finally pull television into the modern times” and an idea that was fully supported by Moore (Armstrong, 2013, p. 38). She was also to be divorced, an idea Moore--herself a divorcée--liked for its fresh approach, but one CBS executives shot down as too progressive and unlikeable (Armstrong, 2013; Dow, 1996). Instead, Mary was to be starting over after a long term relationship in which her boyfriend refused to propose, the story alluding to the idea the two lived together outside of wedlock but never directly addressing it. Mary was a woman who had sought the traditional life of marriage and found herself a single, independent woman (Armstrong, 2013).

Mary, alongside single friend Rhoda Morgenstern, “had to deal with a specific set of problems caused by their status as this new type of woman,” and as a result their characters “created not only a different kind of show, but a different kind of woman” (Schweitzer, 2015, p. 65). Not only do they work, but they maintain competence, their charm not resting on ditzy behavior like Marlo Thomas’s *That Girl* (Dow, 1996). Mary’s high esteem for work as a television producer also reflected the Baby Boomer drive for success, while her independence and value for that work represented the growing impact of the feminist movement (Schewitzer, 2015; Dow, 1996). The show’s 1970 premiere fell among a rise of media coverage of the women’s liberation movement and liberal and second-wave feminist ideals. The basic premise--Mary’s rejection of continuing to wait for an engagement ring and to instead become a career women--is tightly woven into the conversation of the times (Dow, 1996). The show’s feminism, however, was not not without flaw.

Dow (1996) asserted that there are several key problematic areas with the show’s portrayal of the working woman. First, Mary’s actual work as a television producer is rarely

seen. Her desk is situated in a male-dominated office in a manner that could easily confuse Mary with a secretary, her actions rarely taking her beyond the desk and typewriter. Second, the approach to feminism is individualistic over systemic. Mary chose her independence and career as a lifestyle, an option not afforded to all. The show never addresses the larger systemic problems of women entering the workforce beyond the idea that access to a typically male job is not always available. But women who enter these traditional male professions never cease to be a woman. Therefore, Mary also never escapes the expected female roles. The office becomes her nuclear family, Mary effortlessly shifting between the roles of daughter, mother and fill-in wife among her colleagues. She is charming and attractive, nice to a fault, and embodies the roles of a perfect woman. The nuclear family feel and fulfillment of female roles, however, allowed both male and female audiences to find strings of familiarity in a new situation on screen (Dow, 1996). Once the *Mary Tyler Moore* model was established and accepted, this need for familiarity dwindled as the model received new faces and tweaks.

#### *The Post-Mary Tyler Moore Era*

The *Mary Tyler Moore* independent female model--one created by Mary and in some capacity Rhoda<sup>1</sup>, who would go on to receive her own spin-off and be portrayed as the owner of a successful window dressing business--created a shifting dynamic for female portrayals (Schweitzer, 2015). While *That Girl* and *Mary Tyler Moore* made a working woman acceptable, the portrayals that followed made them "common, and finally unremarkable," (Press, 2009, p. 143). This journey to unremarkable started right alongside Mary throughout the 1970s, first with the introduction of the divorced women. Rhoda Morgenstern herself marries and goes through a

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<sup>1</sup> While Rhoda was an independent working woman who had to navigate being single and thirty-something, her character was often much more focused on attracting a husband. Mary's main focus remained career-oriented (Press, 2009).

divorce on the *Rhoda* spin-off, an interesting play by the once divorce-shy CBS to boost series ratings and position *Rhoda* once again as an independent working woman more like Mary.

Perhaps the most successful divorced woman portrayal came through Ann Romano, a mother of two teenagers whose divorce leads her to a period of self-discovery on *One Day at a Time*. Ann continuously turns down romantic pursuits, including multiple proposals from a boyfriend, in favor of her independence and identity development (Dow, 1996). The 1980s introduced *Kate and Allie*, a divorced single mother duo who merge their families and live together. The series found uniqueness in the fact that they each sought self-actualization and independence alongside another woman, replacing a role traditionally presented by boyfriend, father, male boss or other family-esque male figure (Rabinovitz, 1989). *Who's The Boss?* also featured a unique take on the single woman family, with the lead character a working woman with a hired male helper to assist with household duties (Press, 2009).

While the rise of the divorced single mother sitcom featured working women who could give credit to *Mary Tyler Moore*, they mainly lacked the workplace focus. The 1980s and 1990s saw more examples of the workplace comedy, including the successful *Designing Women* and *Murphy Brown*. *Designing Women* managed to weave feminist and political commentary into its storylines, but the show's setting at a home-based interior design firm and almost all-female staff gave the show a deeply feminine spin. *Murphy Brown* most regularly drew *Mary Tyler Moore* comparisons for its female in a newsroom focus, but Murphy and Mary largely differed. As Dow (1996) explained:

Murphy does not achieve success by playing a domestic role in the workplace; rather, she has adapted successfully to the masculine culture of television journalism and made her

way to the top of her profession through rugged individualism. The fact that Murphy's professional competence is never an issue on *Murphy Brown* shows progress since *Mary Tyler Moore*. Murphy is a media "star," a knowledgeable, driven, investigative reporter who has won numerous awards. Unlike *Mary Tyler Moore*, in which the narrative problematic was "can she make it on her own?" *Murphy Brown* has moved beyond such a question. (p. 140)

While these qualities made positive strides for women, the portrayal was not without its problems, including a focus on Murphy's competition with other women and the fact the show laughed at Murphy's non-feminine qualities instead of emphasizing the fact she had to adopt them to succeed (Dow, 1996).

When *Ally McBeal* premiered in 1997, critics once again found a character to compare to Mary Richards. While the show did feature a single female lawyer and tackled the occasional heavy issue like sexual harassment, for the most part it was the quintessential post-feminist example of women absorbed in the personal. Ally is part of a group of women who "have benefited from the breaking down of professional barriers of women, and with these battles won are free to obsess about their relational lives, which Ally does with a vengeance" (Dow, 2002, p. 261). Ally is much more self-absorbed, her character's education and professional successes are borderline expected, coming with ease. As Rapping (2000) explained, this has created a generation of women who view this behavior as a form of liberation, creating "permission to retreat to the worst pre-sixties attitudes and behaviors and still 'succeed' financially and romantically...Postfeminism has created some very poor role models for women in real life and on television, and *Ally McBeal* is certainly one of them" (p. 21). Rapping further elaborated that

while this is a form of progress (“Sex, money, the right to dress as you please [at least on television]; that’s a lot more than Donna Reed could have hoped for”), it leaves behind discussion of topics that are important to society and women of all backgrounds (Rapping, 2000, p. 21). This postfeminism trend continued into the 2000s, most prominently with *Sex and the City*, which focused on four career women navigating their sexual escapades and relationships in the New York City dating landscape and committed to a full-fledged pink and girly vibe.

### *The Millennial Comedy Landscape*

*Girls*, Lena Dunham’s comedy-drama, has been a fixture of pop culture discussion and a leader in the new era of millennial-driven comedy. During its five year run it examined the lives of four women living, but not necessarily thriving, in Brooklyn as they enter their mid-20s. Their stuck position represents what Wanzo (2016) calls the “precarious girl comedy,” a trendy new genre in which characters’ abjection is the fixture (p. 29). These characters are often “experiencing arrested development--economically and often psychologically” and represent the insecurity followed by the 2000s Great Recession (p. 28). In addition, the character’s abjection and alienating qualities become a--if not *the*--source of comedy, with the character accepting and embracing her abjection as a form of acknowledgment that she may not achieve mobilization in her life and career (Wanzo, 2016). This wandering, directionless portrayal of characters has become a foundation of the new millennial comedy. While shows often feature the same or updated versions of tropes from the days of sitcom past, characters from 1990s series like *Friends* “were largely aspirational — even if their characters didn’t have the things they wanted, they seemed certain about the directions in which they were headed” (Jaffe, 2016). Other millennial-driven shows that take note from this trend are *Insecure*, *Love* and *Master of None*.

Many of these shows are also often noted for the hyperreal. *Girls* and *Broad City* have drawn attention for gritty, non-romanticized sex scenes and that vulgarity is a common occurrence in the day-to-day lives of characters (Dominus, 2016; Paumgarten, 2014).

### *Other Shows of Note*

Before further exploring my creative project, it is worth briefly reviewing a handful of other current millennial female portrayals in the sitcom realm. *The Mindy Project* and *New Girl* have dominated as players in the quirky working girl portrayal, though Mindy Kaling and Zooey Deschanel both are more closely aligned with the Gen-X generation, their birth dates hovering around 1980. While both have had some positive moments, they also flirt with the postfeminist and the stories often revolve around the personal life. Mindy Kaling's Mindy Lahiri character is perhaps more successful, with the show often poking fun of and critiquing romcom tropes and creating a character who makes decisions that put her career first. As Schweitzer (2015) explained:

“Life, for Lahiri, just like for contemporary women, is not just about finding love. Life is not just about playing the role of a romcom heroine. Life now affords other opportunities. As Mary Tyler Moore discovered decades earlier, and as countless women discovered as a result of Mary and Rhoda's adventures, not only could they work, but their careers could be just as fulfilling, if not more so, than romance.” (Schweitzer, 2015, p. 69)

Both *The Mindy Project* and *New Girl* are coming to an end, though, leaving two large openings in the line-up of female-driven comedy.

Issa Rae's *Insecure* follows in *Girls*'s HBO steps, the show focused on a twenty-something struggling for grounding and fulfillment in her career and relationships. The

show does have more positive merit than *Girls*, though, not only for its predominantly black cast but for showing more breadth of millennials, with characters being in a variety of stages of professional fulfillment. It also addresses more political and feminist issues, including racism, inequality, and equal pay. *Younger* features a more positive millennial portrayal with Hilary Duff's Kelsey Peters, a career-driven book editor who often places her work above relationships. Kelsey stands out for her competence as opposed to shows like the one-season *Great Indoors*, which made millennials the punchlines for their incompetence and tech-obsessed ways. *Great News*, a Tina Fey produced workplace comedy, produces the character most closely aligned with Mary Richards. The protagonist, Katie, is a driven, rising news producer focused on her career. Katie, however, at times lacks the poise of Mary Richards or feels juvenile thanks to the addition of her overbearing mother, the character who drives the bulk of the show's conflict as an office intern.

### **The Project Experience & Reflection**

This project involved developing a half-hour comedy, *Technically IN*, that draws inspiration from *Mary Tyler Moore* as a workplace and single woman comedy. My goal was not to copy the show directly but use it as inspiration in shaping successful characters and an engaging, comedic world for them to live and work. The series features main character Madeline, a woman on the cusp of 30 who has been supporting her partner through a PhD program for approximately seven years. Upon realizing he treats her more like a mother and isn't invested in her own career success, she leaves him, moving from Columbus, Ohio, to take a new job as a web and app developer at an Indianapolis-based agency. Madeline moves in with Autumn, her friend from college and a Spanish teacher at a public high school. Together they

share one side of a duplex owned by Madeline's childhood friend and their fellow college classmate Charlotte, a lawyer who who lives on the other side of the duplex with her husband Alex and toddler, Zooley. Throughout the first season Madeline is faced with navigating her career and life changes, self-doubt about her choices and her competence as a developer, and choices on how to shape a successful career in tech--especially when trying to break into a boys club at the office.

Entering this project I wanted to take into consideration the representation of women, minorities, and millennials in the current television and film landscape. As the literature review showed, many working, single woman comedies have entered this landscape over the past 47 years. None can be seen as perfect in their portrayal of women, nor will anything likely ever be viewed as perfect. That being said, I tried to take into consideration many of the feminist criticisms laid out in the review in an attempt to avoid reproducing these problems. To address Dow's (1996) direct criticisms of *Mary Tyler Moore*, I wanted to be sure Madeline works on screen, and in the pilot I give her more fight and pushback to actually work. Madeline's pencil sharpening tirade is a direct nod to the *Mary Tyler Moore* pilot where, on the first day, Mary sits at her desk and sharpens pencils when her boss, Lou, doesn't provide her with anything to do. In addition, Charlotte and Autumn are given opportunity to work on screen throughout the series treatment. There's no confusion that these are, in fact, career women.

Dow (1996) also notes that Mary is quick to fall into her expected female roles, flitting between mother, daughter, and wife in the office. Madeline's quest is more to find equal grounds among her team, and the fact she left a relationship that required her to fulfill these roles shows pushback. While Cliff is positioned as more a father-figure in the office, his role is very much in

the background. The third argument critiqued Mary's feminism as individualistic over systemic and that her opportunities were not afforded to all. In today's economic climate we more readily accept that a woman, especially one who is unmarried, often needs to work. Having a career isn't a lifestyle choice as much as it was then, and therefore Madeline, Charlotte and Autumn are all situated in their careers. While Mary was part of the generation who won the fight to be in the workplace, these millennial characters are more part of the generation fighting for the workplace environment to be more welcoming and safe. Madeline's fight is to be a part of the team; Charlotte faces inappropriate behavior from an older male partner at her firm. These issues are systemic problems.

Beyond *Mary Tyler Moore* the other criticisms to consider were Rapping's (2000) and Dow's (2002) push back at post-feminist characters (Ally McBeal in particular) and their focus on personal issues and Dow's (1996) argument that *Murphy Brown* needed better critique of how *Murphy* needed to adopt male characteristics to succeed. Pulling from my own life experience and personal relationships, I think avoiding personal issues in general is unrealistic. However, I did seek to balance the personal with the career, bouncing storylines back and forth between work and home for Madeline, Autumn, and Charlotte, just as *Mary Tyler Moore* often did for Mary. Throughout the first season treatment relationships sometimes become a focus for Madeline as she navigates leaving her previous relationship behind, though they do not come up as heavily for Autumn. Charlotte is already married, putting her in a natural place for her family to play an important role in her life alongside her career. The *Murphy Brown* critique is harder to directly address other than making an effort to avoid having the characters feel they need to

change their behaviors to become more aggressively and traditionally male. This, however, was never really a consideration. I wanted their actions to be part of their existing personalities.

In addition, diversity was a key issue I took into consideration. According to USC Annenberg's Media, Diversity and Social Change Initiative, only 23.8% of speaking roles are given to minorities, 72.1% of LGBT characters are males, and of those LGBT characters, 78.9% are white. Overall, women remain underrepresented, with only 33.5% of speaking characters across broadcast, streaming, cable and film given to women (Smith, Choueiti, Pieper, Case, & Tofan, 2016). While it is impossible to attempt to fix every diversity issue with one show--race, sexuality, disability, etc.--I did my best to map out a character world that does not neglect diversity and features biracial, black, Indian and bisexual characters. Overall, though, most of the characters are written in a manner where their race would not be all that big of a factor, and more sexual identities could be explored.

The criticism that most fueled my project was my own displeasure in millennial portrayals and the precarious girl model Wanzo (2016) discussed. *Girls* was always positioned and analyzed as a show that was supposed to be representative of me, but I never identified with the characters. The characters on *Broad City* are equally unrelatable. While millennials have been handed a tough economy and the career start has been rocky, these shows often feature characters so far adrift from any professional success and so severely narcissistic it's painful to watch. Yet the trend continues, with a new show of similar characters (Freeform's *Alone Together*) popping up just since I started writing. I entered this project selfishly wanting to see myself and my friends reflected on screen, to see positive portrayals of my generation, and to see

more career women in my age bracket. *Mary Tyler Moore*, the original small screen working woman, was therefore the natural fit to draw inspiration.

### *The Process*

As a writer who has traditionally not been one to plan out much in advance, the pilot and treatment writing process were experiences that pushed me. They were also challenging due to my overthinking nature. I started with developing character sketches of the three main female characters--Madeline, Autumn, and Charlotte--because they were the most clear to me. They were also the ones based on myself (Madeline) and my friends. The office team was a little more challenging for me, which I think is because I tend not to write male characters as often. The rough description of the pilot was then developed, and following my prospectus defense I considered the suggested changes and critiques.

The first 11 pages were drafted in November and December, and I was fortunate enough to have it read aloud in open workshop in ENG 615. That opportunity helped me hear that the pacing was off, and most of those pages were completely scrapped. My overthinking nature kicked into high drive in January as I tried to structure the pilot. I rewatched the *Mary Tyler Moore* pilot a handful of times and spent time reading and re-reading a handful of pilots for some of my favorite shows, including *New Girl*, *Parks and Recreation*, and *Playing House*. In the end I relied most heavily on the script for the *Parks and Recreation* episode "Practice Date," my personal favorite episode. I analyzed and broke down the number of scenes and pages in each act to get a better feel for pacing. Also helpful was Charney's (2014) article "Cracking the Sitcom Code," which created a minute-by-minute framework of a typical sitcom. Using this framework I

developed my own worksheet to re-write my outline and better structure the story in a more traditional sitcom style.

After the first draft I moved to writing the treatment, which entailed utilizing a stockpile of situation ideas I had accumulated over the past few months and trying to connect them in ways that made sense. I also had to consider where I wanted the characters to end up at the end of the season. Writing the treatment was more a process of discovery. Things shifted as I wrote, discoveries made, ideas sparked. I approached the treatment by thinking of the season in three chunks: the first being about Madeline settling in and winning acceptance from the team; the second being about them hitting their groove together and getting into the work; the third creating some new conflicts and set-up for a second season. I had a decent map of those ideas, but as I wrote and new ideas emerged I ended up moving some stories around or removing some altogether. Once the season treatment was written I returned to the pilot for revision, utilizing the discoveries made in the treatment to inform my revisions. Lastly I developed the treatment for the pilot episode as well as a brief season one overview.

### **Conclusion**

Nothing is ever going to replace *Mary Tyler Moore* (though with the trend of remakes I would not be surprised to see it come back in some form), but that was never my original goal. However, I do think this project was able to honor the spirit of Mary as a character. The story I developed is about new beginnings, the courage to change and walk away from situations not serving you, and finding your way in your career and life--all with good friends by your side. These elements were key to *Mary Tyler Moore*'s first season, and there's room for my characters and situations to grow just as they did throughout the show's seven seasons. Moving forward,

this pilot and treatment provide an extensive piece for my screenwriting portfolio to utilize for festivals, contests, and fellowship applications. As of March 15 parts of it were submitted as the basis of my Sundance Episodic Lab competition application. I look forward to continue working with it as a creative piece, tweaking, revising and polishing it in the months to come.

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