

Running down the hall in my “Belle” fuzzy socks. The grips on the bottom of my feet stopping me from going any faster. I join together with Calexa, my best friend. Calexa and I did everything together, we ate the same food, liked the same things, and got into trouble together. To me, there was no better way to live; for my parents, however, they could have gone without Calexa in my early years as she got me into a lot of trouble. I would tell my parents that “Calexa did it” and that they could go ask her themselves. They never did, though, they couldn’t see her: Calexa was a ghost. The first character I ever created was mischievous, naive, and youthful.

Growing up, I would imagine myself in any film I was watching. Due to my impressive imagination, I was able to come up with stories of my own. I would entertain myself by becoming an older sister taking care of her younger siblings while they survived long, frigid nights on the streets, trying to find their parents. The impact characters had on me inspired me to act in high school theater and film productions. I have played roles ranging from the stereotypical “mean girl” to a complex role of a girl being abused by her insane boyfriend, for which I won an Emmy. By living vicariously through characters, I was able to escape my reality and enter another world.

Characters are a gateway between real and imaginary life. Each character I create has the ingenuity and strength of a human being. These characters are placed in scenarios that are similar to real life ensuring that the audience can dive into a world I create around them. I create these characters in honest worlds to escape from reality. I used to write to fit words on a page, get good grades, and get by at work. Now, I write to free myself, to create a false reality I can fall into when needed. I create to cure my mind of all its troubles, obsessively and compulsively. When the characters overcome their hardships, it proves to me that I can too.

I write to prove to my younger self and others who are struggling that they too can escape their hardships and enter the fun and fulfilling world of film. Every part of my heart and soul are poured into the films I create or am a part of. I once felt less alone by watching a character go through similar experiences; and I pray that my films can help others do the same. When I take charge behind the camera, I create angles that show the depth of what a character is dealing with or, while in the editing room, I work with different color schemes to portray different emotions. I take inspiration from my life or things that I have seen in close friends and family's lives. While some characters are completely original, others may be based on someone close to me. Storylines range from my personal experiences to unthought of, dystopian worlds where everyone lives in harmony until one rises up and rebels.

Film portrays the good, bad, and ugly sides of me and my life. Pouring everything I can into every production I create is my way of ensuring that audiences know they are not alone. My films point out the flaws of characters we relate to and force audience members to think about themselves through a deeper lense. Whether I am writing, directing, editing, or anything in between. Storytelling has proven to me that there is no better way to get a point across than to make people feel seen and less alone, and that everyone needs a Calexa of their own.