

Section 1: Television Information

Group members:



Title:

- *The Janitor*
- The title is simple as it describes the everyday life of Alex Wright as a janitor in an office building. Yet, the title has a deeper meaning for Wright's life outside of her day job. The triple entendre comes from her hitman status as Wright cleans up other people's messes, but also how she was forced into this occupation to fix her own messy life, repaying her debts.

Genre:

- Horror/thriller/drama
- *The Janitor* falls under the thriller and drama genres. It falls under drama because of the relatable undertones of Alex Wright having to handle the struggles of her everyday life, while also juggling her secret life as a rather far-fetched criminal. The thriller aspect comes from the dramatized and gruesome nature of Wright's side work. Further, the construction of the formal aspects such as lighting and cinematography promote the idea of a fictional, horror visual approach to the show as a whole.

Synopsis:

- Modern day
- An orphan saved from an abusive family in a drug-filled home, Alex Wright has managed to correct her life to a steady job as daytime janitor in modern-day Chicago. But when her orphaned mother dies and her brother, Jamie Dixon, is taken for ransom, Alex exhausts any and all options for his safe return. When the authorities prove to be no help, she turns to her biological mother's client and mob boss, Donovan DeNico, as a last resort. In exchange for Jamie's safe return, Donovan requires Wright to become a hitman. Alex, a talented killer, works actively to please her boss, but becomes too consumed by her work. Consequently, she finds pleasure in acting against those who cause her even minor inconvenience. When her pleasure leads to the killing of a member of DeNico's family, she must decide if she will live a life on the run, or face her boss in one last attempt to return to normalcy.

Section 2: Character Biography

Character Name:

- Alex Wright

Physical:

- Alex is a shorter female with an average build; she also has a scar on her leg and struggles with a limp due to an injury from her abusive parents. Gender plays a large role in our show, especially with themes of power and looking beyond the surface. When we think of a janitor, we immediately assume someone male; in fact, when looking into possible janitor costumes, all of the uniforms were labeled male, resulting in her baggy shirt and pants ensemble. Furthermore, when females are depicted in gangs/mafia, they are typically oversexualized. We wanted to create a female character that had dimension and wanted her strengths to come from her actions and intelligence, rather than make her sole purpose come from a place of inferiority.

Personality:

- Alex is quiet, and lacks basic social skills. She finds comfort in being alone and keeping to herself. Although quiet to the world, she does come out of her shell with her brother Jamie who knows her best. She likes things done in a particular way and is short tempered when it comes to her work. She is driven and passionate, she takes what most would overlook and think deeply about it. Alex is caring but only to those she trusts, which is few. She enjoys reading and listening to music, specifically any songs from previous generations.

Life Experiences:

- **Event 1:** Alex was brought into a rough world and even rougher family, she was left to fend for herself at a very young age. This caused her to develop trust issues and lack of social skills. She remembers not being able to ask for help because her mother was always “with clients” so she learned to figure out stuff on her own.
- **Event 2:** When Alex’s life started to change for the better, she was adopted by her mother. She meets her brother and best friend Jamie Dixon. They grow up together and become very close. She feels the most safe and comfortable around Jamie. Her favorite memory is sitting in their basement playing video games together and talking about their goals in life.
- **Event 3:** Alex finds herself lost in the world and does not know what she wants to do. She doesn't feel right going to school or getting a job where social skills are needed. She decided to take an easy job as a janitor at a young age so she could figure out her own emotional issues by being alone. She finds comfort in working at night when everyone is gone from the building. This is before she starts killing and before Jamie is taken.

Current Experience:

- Alex is currently living comfortably, working as a janitor, and killing on the side for money. She feels like life is actually going up right now and her evil demeanor is not an issue. Although on the outside she looks good and stable, she is struggling with her own emotional issues and resorts to killing to help her “fix” it. This all changes in an instant when she makes a grave mistake and kills the mob boss’s family member. Now her life is going to change drastically and this is where she must learn to face these issues head on. She has no friends and now must learn to trust people to help as she tries to fix this big mistake. Although this kill satisfied her for the moment, it will now be the last for a while as she has to fix the issue at hand.

Section 3: Character Inspiration

Character Inspiration 1:

- Don Draper: *Mad Men*
- At first glance, Don Draper seems like he has a cookie-cutter life. He lives in a nice house with his wife and kids, he goes to work every day, and he commutes into the city. However, Draper is a flawed man; as he's an alcoholic and a womanizer. In the first episode, we see him with another woman before even finding out he has a wife and kids. While he comes off as a perfectionist to his coworkers, the audience is starting to see him crack. Similar to *Mad Men*, this show kicks off by "the beginning of the end" of Alex's journey. Alex might not have wealth, but the nature of her job gives her the chance to have some control. She's particulate and her actions are done with intention. We see this in the closet where she straightens out her cleaning supplies just before brutally murdering someone. Both characters are not satisfied with their lives, but their job/jobs are their one moment of control.

Character Inspiration 2:

- Red: *Orange is The New Black*
- When we are first introduced to Red, there are clear stereotypes presented. We see her as an outsider who is coldhearted and has a sketchy past. Regardless of Red's true personality, plenty of our reactions to Red's decisions are based on these stereotypes. Perception plays a large part in our show. TV shows consistently portray janitors as an oddball or socially awkward and as if they are lesser than anyone else. Alex is constantly seen as lesser than the people around - whether it's her family, Donovan, or the employees at her side job. This negative perception results in dire consequences. We see this in *Orange is The New Black* when Piper complains about Red's phone, resulting in a used tampon in her food; and with Emily in *The Janitor* when she disregards the coffee spill, resulting in her brutal death.

Character Inspiration 3:

- Sherlock Holmes: *Elementary*
- While we only watched a short clip of *Elementary*, we were given a clear insight into Sherlock Holmes' character. Sherlock may be the protagonist, but his actions don't always match our morals. However, despite his questionable actions, we still root for the character. We wanted to create a protagonist where the audience is constantly conflicted about their actions, as it creates a more multidimensional character. We've seen in past shows that the protagonist tends to become less of a focus as they tend to follow a "perfect formula" (think Piper in *Orange is The New Black*), but we want the audience to consistently be drawn to Alex. While Alex has committed countless crimes and taken lives, her childhood and her relationship with Donovan paints a larger picture of the

situation. Like Sherlock, we wanted her actions to feel like they were a necessity. So while the audience doesn't want to see Alex continue on this killing spree, they understand the purpose behind it.

Section 4: Filming Techniques and Explanation

Technique 1: Deliberate choice of music

- We chose the song “Taking care of business” because of the ironic tone. The song is playing in the background of the janitor murdering what looks to be an innocent woman. Her job is to clean messes and the woman spilling coffee required her to clean up a bigger mess besides the drink. The song playing in the back is very ironic to the actual situation that is serious and very different. The song also gives the character a playful feeling although she is right about to murder someone, which adds to the irony of the show.

Technique 2: Low angle

- When shooting this scene, the Janitor is given a sense of power, so most of her shots are from below looking up. Because of her past and rough beginning in life, she now feels that having control in her work gives her the power to do whatever she wants. She feels entitled to kill these people based on any of her opinions so she is shot from below, as if her victims are below her on a social/physical standing. Shooting from below is a common and obvious way to give a character power, and that power might shift depending on the scenario. For this sequence, she has the power and feels that herself.

Technique 3: Light and Dark: Contrast between light and dark

- The janitor has an evil demeanor and people usually associate that with darkness. The janitors closet is used as her safe space and it is naturally a dark, cold, and condensed space. This helps to set up her character as someone who feels comfortable in a situation most would feel the exact opposite. The only light in the room is where the victim is restrained, and the significance is that she is innocent. The janitor mostly stays within the dark and even in the bright hallway scene, she keeps her face low to show a subtle shadow. The shadow and darkness around her face signifies evil.