



**English transcript of BSL Zone: Looking to the Future.
Presented by Rececca A. Withey, featuring Rinkoo
Barpaga, Aimee Campbell-Nottage and Charlie Swinbourne
on 14th November 2023**

***- based on live voiceovers by Sandy Deo, Winston Denerley, Kat Wright and
Darren Townsend-Handscorb***

Rebecca	Welcome to this BSL Zone live stream. My name is Rebecca Withey and tonight, I'll be talking to three very interesting people. We will be opening the floor to your comments and your questions as well. Let me introduce who I will be talking to... We'll be talking to Rinkoo Barpaga; welcome, Rinkoo.
Rinkoo	Hello everybody.
Rebecca	Rinkoo very recently has just released a documentary called Birmingham Made Me and we'll be talking about that. Also joining us we have Aimee Campbell-Nottage.
Aimee	Hello.
Rebecca	Now Aimee, you are producer/director at the moment, aren't you, for a new documentary? So, Aimee will be talking to us a little bit more about that tonight.
Aimee	Can't wait.
Rebecca	And last but not least, we also have joining us - Charlie Swinbourne.
Charlie	Hello.
Rebecca	Now Charlie is actually an executive producer here at BSLBT and we'll be talking about their new scheme tonight. So, welcome. Now remember, tonight we will also be answering questions from the audience as well as mine. Now my first question is for Rinkoo: now of course your new documentary Birmingham Made Me went out very recently and I'm quite interested in it personally because I actually come from the West Midlands, not far from Birmingham, so I was really excited to see that, to see your documentary filmed around Birmingham. So can you talk to us a little bit about why you decided to make that documentary?
Rinkoo	Yes of course. Hello everybody. I decided to make the documentary because I'm really into street photography and one of the aims of the documentary was to show me taking photos of strangers in the street. So, I've actually taken about 7,000 street portraits in my career, so that's why I wanted this documentary to focus on that, with people doing gestures, showing their life, showing what it's like in society. The documentary focuses on my street photography, but it also focuses on what it was like to grow up in Birmingham and facing a lot of discrimination. So, it's a bit about my personality and bit about street photography.



Rebecca	That's lovely. It was really nice to see elements of your personality, how elements of your childhood and growing up in Birmingham have influenced what you do now, being a photographer, being a comedian. Throughout the process of making your documentary, you were directing and presenting it as well. How was that... how did that work?
Rinkoo	Well to be honest it's always a bit of a challenge trying to balance both roles, but the most important thing is just enjoying what I'm doing. I enjoy directing and I enjoy presenting, so I was balancing both roles really well but we did have an assistant director who was able to give an outside perspective because of course when I was presenting I wasn't able to see myself from that outside perspective, but no, I really enjoyed the filming and the whole process.
Rebecca	Wonderful, you are obviously a very talented individual. Now ... were there any challenges or barriers that you had to overcome? Were there any difficulties throughout the process?
Rinkoo	Well the main challenge was being out of practise, to be honest, you know, I've done a lot of individual film projects in the past but this was my first opportunity to work in a team with Drummer TV. It was great working with Bim Ajadi who is a famous director and you know, it was really interesting having that team dynamic and, to be honest, it was a bit of a struggle trying to convey my ideas to the team and trying to get everybody to work together, and be on the same page, because we were going off the point a little bit. You know, sometimes talking about my performances in theatre, but we had to try and bring it back onto the documentary.
Rebecca	So that's fabulous, so you obviously had a really strong team supporting you. Now of course you mentioned Drummer TV and I know that Aimee is also working with Drummer TV. Rinkoo, are there any further plans in the future for any more films? Anything in mind?
Rinkoo	Well, I'm really hoping to be involved in film more in the future. The release of the documentary last week was great and I've been getting lots of positive feedback, so I'm going to take a lot of that on board and produce more films in the future. But it's a slow journey. But yes, I'm definitely hoping to carry on.
Rebecca	Well I really enjoyed it and I wondered, what was the reception like from your family because it was obviously very personal? You talked a lot about your parents, what their influence on you has been. The street gang influence... so of course, some of those things must have been a negative impact, but you know, obviously you've been successful.
Rinkoo	Yes, absolutely. It was difficult to share because I try not to talk too much about my area and, you know, when my family saw what I was talking about, they told me to be more honest. That can be really difficult in the British Asian community because, you know, they can be very closed off, as well as the Deaf community. We don't see a lot of ourselves in the mainstream, so I wanted to break those barriers and show the mainstream what we're about.
Rebecca	Well it was really powerful, so well done. I think one element actually that impacted me was when you said you were a young boy and somebody slapped you on the back of your head because they thought you were evil. And I thought wow! Oh my God, it's such a taboo to be



	deaf in the Asian community, or it was back then, so I think actually, sharing that experience is really important, to make sure that other deaf Asians don't feel like they're the only ones.
Rinkoo	Yes, absolutely. When we went back to the streets where I grew up, Bim Ajadi, who I was working with, I've known him for absolutely years and he's a good friend of mine, he was watching me tell my story and, you know, when I was telling the stories and explaining these moment, Bim was saying "Oh, hang on a minute, you're talking about being slapped in India and what happened there," and I was explaining there's some people who believe in faith and religion and those people, those faiths and religions, they believe that if you are deaf, you did something bad in a previous life and so you were almost born again with this toxic trait. So, this is the stigma that I had to face. Not only in my community – the Black community also faces this mentality. So, when I started to tell that story to Bim, he said to tell more, to explain more, and really explore this idea and you know, I didn't realise what was going on when I was younger but as I got older I realised that those oppressions I was facing was because people believed I'd done something bad in a previous life. But lots of other people have said that's not necessarily true, so, you know, it can be difficult to know who to believe.
Rebecca	I can imagine, I mean I really enjoyed the documentary. Are you happy with it? Is there anything that you would do differently or anything you would change?
Rinkoo	Ooh, that's a fantastic question. I'm not completely satisfied with the documentary. You know, when I watched it, I'm a bit of a perfectionist, so I was thinking, "Oh I've missed that, I could have done this," and to be honest it's just brewed some more ideas which will give me new projects in the future and hopefully I'll be able to explore those ideas.
Rebecca	A huge well done. I really, really hope that more members of our audience watch your programme. And of course, if any audience members do have any questions to Rinkoo, please send them in and we will answer them later on. Thank you very much, Rinkoo. Now I'd like to move on and talk to Aimee, so hello again, Aimee.
Aimee	Hi.
Rebecca	I just wanted to talk to you a little bit more about your background. So let's look back at the beginning of your career, you were a teaching assistant, right, and then a trainee teacher. And then you became part of the media world. I remember Magic Hands on CBeebies, and now you've become a producer/director, so I just wanted to talk a little bit more about this new initiative that you're involved in, a new documentary, as a producer/director. Can you talk to us a little bit more about that?
Aimee	Sure. The documentary isn't actually out yet so I can't tell you too much about it, but it focuses on two deaf sisters who have their own business called The Deaf Chefs. They started their business through lockdown and we filmed them getting their food truck ready to launch and we are looking at their journey and the barriers that they are facing. The documentary follows their journey.
Rebecca	Wow that's really interesting. So, ok, so the story's about two deaf sisters, Deaf Chefs. What made you ... what was the attraction to that story? What made you want to do that?

Aim	I think because it was the first deaf-led food truck. They didn't have any support from external funders; they raised the money themselves and money from the Deaf community helped them to start their business from scratch... and they are two women. You know, it's often men that you see doing these renovations, but they're women and they're doing it, so I think it's important to show that. I know Coco very well and I think she felt she could trust me with her story. If I didn't know them, it might have been harder to tell that story, but we know each other well. Our fathers grew up with each other. So, you know, she knew me and trusted me to tell her story, so that was really great.
Rebecca	That's amazing, so this film production now, how's it all going?
Aimee	It's interesting, the documentary world is very different from drama. With drama, you've got scripts that you have to follow and a schedule, but documentaries are so different; you could film one thing and then the next day everything could change. There could be a change of schedule, or the story changes and you have to think how to keep the story going. You know, what I imagined at the first instance is completely different to what is happening now because obviously lots of things have happened during the process. Filming has been great and we're still editing at the moment. Hopefully, we can deliver it by Christmas.
Rebecca	Ooh, that's quite soon - fast approaching deadlines.
Aimee	Very soon!
Rebecca	So you also have been working with Drummer TV, so how has that relationship worked for you?
Aimee	Luckily, I was already working with Drummer on Sign2Win , you know, the Deaf game show. So I was already in that team and I had a working relationship with them and they encouraged me to apply for the initiative, so I did. Obviously, with already working with them, you know, it wasn't working with strangers, we knew each other. All of their office staff have learned sign language and they are very supportive, so I feel Drummer are the best production company that I could have done this with.
Rebecca	Oh wow, it's really nice that you and Rinkoo have worked with Drummer TV. Ooh, Charlie.
Charlie	If I could just come in. I'm wondering whether you'd like to carry on with documentaries or would you like to go back to drama now? I know drama's best, don't you? That's my area, and I know it's really important for you, Aimee.
Aimee	Don't worry, I'm not discounting drama altogether. I have missed it. It has been a while, so I do want to go back to it, definitely, depending on opportunities that become available, I'll always go between the two. I don't want to focus on one. I like both. So yeah. Don't worry, Charlie. I'll carry on!
Charlie	You said earlier that filming was quite different because with factual programming, you don't have a script, you're not working to a script. Can you explain a little bit more about your experience of that?

Aimee	Yeah, so with drama, you already have a script with fixed characters, fixed lines, locations are fixed, and you just have to follow that - you go to that location to film. If you miss a line, you can do it again, it's quite formulaic. It's easier to film – it's stressful, but still easier. With documentaries, you kind of have a rough idea of what you want to film and then you start filming and then something happens, or the story gets a bit lost or people pull out, the weather changes, you know. You have to kind of think what you want to add into the story to make it work, but with drama, that's already set, so it's quite a good challenge.
Rebecca	So I was wondering something similar actually. For this documentary that you're filming at the moment, has anything unexpected happened, where you suddenly have to make changes. Can you give us an example?
Aimee	Obviously, I can't tell you too much because it's not out yet, but there was one situation that I thought would happen with people coming into attendance, but people pulled out of that situation. So once they'd done that I had to change and do it a different way. And I realised actually the change was for the better, so when that party pulled out it was very difficult to know what to do, but we pulled it off.
Rebecca	So it's almost like thinking on your feet, you really have to be really quick with solutions.
Aimee	Yeah. So sometimes, you know, you're filming on a day and at the same time you're having to think, how are we going to end this scene? Do we fade out? What is the conversation? Sometimes you've got this timeline and - you jump across it. You're not filming in chronological order. So you're thinking about how to end things and start things before you've even done them. You're kind of constantly processing backwards and forwards; even in bed, you're still thinking about it.
Rebecca	It's constant planning, I imagine. So thinking about producing and directing, is this something that you want to continue? Do you have more plans that you can share with us?
Aimee	Yeah, I was a presenter from like 8 or 9, but it got quite samey. So I started to work as an assistant producer and I really enjoyed that. And I did that for two or three years, working as an AP, and then I saw this opportunity come up to step up to a producer/director. That's why I applied, and I was really relieved to get the position. So I think, producing and directing, and for some programmes doing both, or directing more programmes will give me more confidence in the long term, but yeah, I'm not sure what's next.
Rebecca	Ooh, I think we do have a question that's popped in. Give me a second. Ooh we have a good question from the audience. So they were just wondering, so Rinkoo, just related to Aimee's experience, Aimee was talking about the difference between dramas and factual documentaries. Have you been through a similar experience yourself?
Rinkoo	I haven't been involved in drama as much, to be honest. It's more the directing and presenting side, but I do find it very difficult trying to switch between theatre and TV. I absolutely agree with what Aimee said, you know, you get given a plan before you show up on the day and then when you show up, it can completely change and you know with that, it happened a lot with my street photography. I had a plan. I went up and the raw reactions and emotions from people completely changed the plan. So, I was able to get stories from people as I spoke to them, but unfortunately, we weren't able to portray the stories in the



	documentary as much. People often felt under pressure from the camera as well. But yes, in terms of TV and theatre it's completely different, but I'm not as experienced in theatre.
Rebecca	But I'm just thinking, obviously you were directing and presenting, so that's quite similar in terms of Aimee. So constantly thinking about right, hold on a minute, directing the scene, but then also producing things. That's quite similar, right?
Rinkoo	Yeah, well, sometimes I was even involved with the editing as well, you know, so as a director, you've got to be thinking about how the next part is relevant to the current scene. So I would encourage people if they want to get involved in filmmaking, look at editing first. Just take some simple little clips, even at home, and put the clips together and look at the editing process and that'll give you a good idea of filmmaking.
Rebecca	I honestly think it's lovely how you're both really growing your talent. So you've obviously started off in one area and then thank you to BSLBT and offering these initiatives you're able to upskill yourselves and then move across into a different role. And I think that's brilliant. I would actually like to move the conversation on actually to Charlie, who's obviously much more involved with BSLBT . Now you're an exec producer, right?
Charlie	Yes. Drama is obviously the best compared to factual.
Rebecca	Well, you would say that, of course.
Charlie	Of course, it's my job, so I have to say that.
Rebecca	So, OK, tell us, so obviously we know what your job title is, but what exactly do you do? What does this role actually entail?
Charlie	I'm an executive producer, but it actually means a lot of things. If people apply to make programmes, I'll read their applications and their ideas. I may interview them. Work out whether we feel it's a good idea for BSLBT or BSL Zone . When they make the programmes, I will read the script update back on it, suggest changes, re-read it and just go through that process. Then they'll make the programme and I'll watch the cut and give feedback on that too. So I think that with drama I'm involved in the whole process. I also will support finding the actors, watching the videos to check if I agree that they're casting appropriately, choosing the director. So I kind of look at everything, approve things and let people know how I feel during the whole process because the aim is we support them to make the best programme possible, and that's my responsibility.
Rebecca	Oh wow, that's a hugely varied role, so it's not... there's not a typical day. I suppose?
Charlie	It changes constantly. It's the strangest thing. You know, at the end of a programme you see the credits roll? I'll even check if the credits are right for a programme; if they're in the right order or if a person has been missed out. I mean, it's the strangest thing because there are things you would never think about as part of programme making, but they are actually part of my job.



Rebecca	So there's a lot of elements actually, that probably the majority of us don't realise are involved?
Charlie	Yeah. It obviously is a very important job. No, I'm teasing! But it is important, actually it's ensuring that you have the right director, the right actors. You know, what you want is to make it to support them so that they can do the best with the programme.
Rebecca	I always think you know, as when you're involved in filmmaking, you just can't switch off. Just like the directors, the producers, the writers, as you're watching something you're constantly learning and developing. So I think that's really exciting, actually, that BSLBT , you've now got a new short film scheme, haven't you, Charlie, can you talk us through that a little bit more?
Charlie	Previously with BSLBT we had a scheme for new people who were making their programmes and short films. And then later we had Zoom Focus, which was for half hour programmes. I think, if I'm right, you were part of that, weren't you Rinkoo?
Rinkoo	Yes, actually I think Zoom was the first step, and then there was Zoom Focus. So there were two different schemes.
Rebecca	I remember that.
Charlie	<p>Yeah, you're right. So that was helping people to get new people, newcomers, to come in, that perhaps hadn't made programmes before. This was their first opportunity to get some experience and then move on to their future careers, and it has helped a number of people to establish their careers. And there aren't many opportunities like that, we want to give young people, also new and inexperienced people, the opportunity again and so this short film scheme at the moment is focused on the writer of the script.</p> <p>So a lot of people that have applied and we will read their scripts. We'll interview them. And then we're going to choose three strong scripts, very, very different stories from the three people. And, we'll then try to push them, because none of them have written their own scripts previously, certainly not a full script for a programme. And so we're giving them training and mentoring and support, and five sessions to help them develop their story to a final script. And then from there, we will then have a director scheme where we will bring in directors who haven't directed previously so people can apply to that to work from those three scripts. And so we'll have one director for one script and so on. So, it's giving two different people two different job roles, the opportunity to ultimately create three films. Three directors, three writers, and it may well be that some writers become directors themselves, but they'll still have to apply separately for that. It's about showcasing what they can do and helping them to work through and understand that process.</p>
Rebecca	Wow, that's amazing. So all these are all new writers, new directors?
Charlie	Yeah, yeah.
Rebecca	So how do you choose? You know when you receive, you must receive so many applications. So when you receive them, I'm just thinking about you personally, what are you looking for? What intrigues you about that writing?



<p>Charlie</p>	<p>It's very strange because when you're reading, you're looking at the ideas. And well, I don't do on my own obviously, there's a team of us and we all read together. We'll discuss and talk about and make notes, and when we interview the writers, we also interview them together. We're not looking at the story alone. We're looking at the writing of the story as well. We're looking at the strengths, whether it's fresh, whether it's different, whether it's new, and then we're thinking about what the audience would react to and love as well. With the writers, we're looking at people with potential. Are they open to feedback? If we are suggesting something to change, we want to know, are they going to accept that, are they going to be receptive to that. And so we're looking at both aspects of that. We're looking at the story and the writer's potential as well.</p>
<p>Rebecca</p>	<p>I think with initiatives like these, we absolutely need to be able to develop those skill sets. Aimee, Rinkoo, do you agree because without it what else is there to really help develop that talent within the Deaf community? Are there any other new initiatives coming up for BSLBT?</p>
<p>Charlie</p>	<p>Well, I think one thing at a time. We want to see how this works and if it works well then, we may do it again. But we're always thinking about the future and we want to encourage new people to get these opportunities, build up the experience and we want to support them to hopefully make short films and then work towards half hour films and then become professional writers and film makers and develop their careers. And so that's the aim.</p>
<p>Aimee</p>	<p>Sorry to interrupt. Earlier you spoke about directing and writing. I know you've done a lot of writing - how do you feel, like ... you've written your vision and you give that to a director? Do you trust them to meet your vision or do you ever feel that they haven't met what you've imagined when you're writing? How do you feel about that process?</p>
<p>Charlie</p>	<p>That's a really good question because I am a writer as well, and so previously, and in fact, I still am, obviously separately from the role I have at BSLBT.</p> <p>And it's a very good question because when I write a script you have to then pass it to a director and you have to be able to communicate with them and explain your feelings, where the script comes from and what the story is that emerges. But at the end of the day, it becomes the director's film. In a way, it's the director who decides. Well, a lot of things. How they direct things, you know? What's the important focus of the story? And so having a good relationship with the director is important. I've had that before, but you do have to give your script over and you don't retain the control over your script, so you are giving it away a little bit. Aimee, do you think you could pass your story over? Give away control?</p>
<p>Aimee</p>	<p>Yes, I could pass it over, especially if there was good communication, I couldn't give it blindly over. You know, I would like to know their vision, you know, and then it would be good to work together. But I couldn't imagine how difficult it must be when you've written it and then you just have to pass it over.</p>
<p>Charlie</p>	<p>Oh, sorry, yes. And whenever I've written something previously when I see it for the first time, I always feel a little strange because it doesn't match the images in my head, it's different. But then I watch it a second time and I enjoy it more. And then finally I forget my own original vision and I retain the director's vision. So it is a process and you do have to get used to that.</p>



Rinkoo	Well, I was just wondering if it's OK to ask this, but is it alright to pass it over to the director and choose the type of director that you want to try and embody your vision?
Charlie	Not really, no, but I think if people feel strongly that a director is perfect, obviously you're going to talk to them. And you can look into the directors you might offer the work to, but ultimately, it's your decision. And in BSLBT we commission the programme so it becomes our responsibility. But yes, you have to trust the director and it's not that we don't want to talk to script writers or directors, absolutely the opposite. Because maybe they have an actor or a director in mind who they love, so we would talk about that and try to think about what they want as well.
Rebecca	Ohh Charlie, we do actually have a question for you from somebody called Ashley. So they have written, they've written a script, but they wanted to know, you know, do you have a deadline? How long does it normally take or is it pretty flexible in terms of the scheme and script writing itself?
Charlie	<p>Excellent questions. Thank you, Ashley. It helps writers to have a deadline, so I think when you are ready, what you don't want then is to wait for six months after that. So the process in terms of the short film scheme is, as I said, to submit the script of the story outline. And then we have a scene-by-scene breakdown.</p> <p>So that's one of the second sessions and then we have three sessions following that for the first script, the second script and the third script. And so those are the five sessions and altogether that process takes about six months. Six months from when we read it and start feeding back to the writer and then having it rewritten and resubmitted, and then we give more feedback and so normally it would take for one short film, script writing takes six months and then we're looking ... and that that's not unusual for the people working in television. So that's polishing the story, the structure and making continual improvements until you have the perfect script.</p>
Rebecca	<p>So there's a lot of amendments throughout, I'm supposing.</p> <p>Now we do also have a question from Marian, for both Aimee and Rinkoo. So it's a two-part question. The first part is - what would you like to see in the future for deaf media?</p> <p>And the second part is - what is your overall aim in your career, where would you like to get to? Aimee, would you like to answer first?</p>
Aimee	OK. I think the future of deaf media, what would I like to see? Some deaf films always say, "We are deaf," but we don't need to talk about the fact that we're deaf. Just make a normal film that's not about the fact that we're deaf. We don't need to keep saying that we're deaf. Let's just make normal films. I would like that. And deaf films are very PG - there isn't any sexuality, there's no fighting, there's no drugs, there's no violence. Other films are, but with deaf films, we can't seem to do that. So I'd like to see more over 18 deaf films. You know, I'd like to see that on an equivalent to a mainstream programme/film.
Charlie	I'm sorry to interrupt, but actually one of the short films is very, very rude, so hopefully Aimee you will feel happy when you watch this one.
Aimee	I'll look forward to it.



Rebecca	But Aimee, what are your career aspirations for the future?
Aimee	So I've made a documentary and that's been great. I'd like to do more of that so I build up my confidence making them. I'd like to keep producing and directing, maybe make a short film. I've got a few ideas. Yeah, so carry on making films, work with different companies, different people, learn more skills. Yeah.
Rebecca	Lovely. Rinkoo, your views please?
Rinkoo	<p>What would I like to see in the future in deaf media? It's a great question and I agree with what a lot of Aimee has said and you know we need to see less PG emotional dramas. We need to see more deaf people who are expressing themselves. Talking about hot topics and hard-hitting topics, taboos, things like that, because in the deaf community we've got billions of stories that could be told, but people refuse to tell them because of the fear of being too honest. So I would love to just show all of those stories. Because you know, people, you know on Netflix are watching so many hearing stories in the mainstream that are so exciting and vibrant. But we haven't got that in the Deaf community. So we need to see more of that.</p> <p>Where do I see myself in the future? Well I was running a one-man show recently in theatre and you know, was really enjoying it. I used to do some filmmaking before that and was enjoying it, but the opportunities were fairly limited. So, in terms of the future, I think just enjoy myself in the moment, I think that's... enjoy what I'm doing and enjoy the filmmaking and I have no idea what I'm gonna be doing in 10 years' time, but I think I'll still be in filmmaking if possible.</p>
Charlie	Rinkoo – what about your photography as well? What's your aim for the future with the photography that you do?
Rinkoo	Well, I definitely want to carry on travelling because, you know, we've had Covid fairly recently and that's meant that I've not been taking as many street photographs. I'd love to go to lots of different European countries to take more photographs. I feel like I've done a bit of it, but I'm not fully satisfied, so I do enjoy it in the moment. I'm not doing it for profit or for monetary gain. I just do it because I enjoy it in the moment and then when I have the photos, I just, you know, I have them as nice memories, but who knows what the future holds?
Rebecca	That's really creative actually, it sounds like you really go with the flow, which is lovely.
Rinkoo	Well thank you.
Rebecca	We do have an additional question from Linda for Charlie. This is again linked to new writers, so when they submit their ideas, are they able to choose which production company they can work with? Or will BSLBT decide that?
Charlie	So with the new writer scheme, they won't be working with a company. They're just going to work with BSLBT . So we are going to run that in-house in terms of developing their script. But we do have additional support from Louis. Sorry, I couldn't spell his first name, Louis Neethling. And so he will also be supporting us with the script work. And so as I said for the



	writing, it's going to be in-house, we will support them, we'll be providing mentoring and the training. So we will be giving a lot of focus on developing the writing skills schools and script.
Rebecca	Lovely, very clear answer there, thank you Charlie. We have another question that's come in directed to Aimee. So the question is, so maybe there's a documentary, maybe perhaps in the mainstream media. Is there anything you'd like to do in the future or you'd like to be involved in documentary-wise?
Aimee	There's a documentary that I can't stop watching called Banged Up Abroad. It's stories about people that have gone on holiday and ended up getting themselves arrested. Maybe they've drugs in their backpack that they weren't aware of, or maybe they've got themselves into trouble and they end up in a foreign prison. And it's all about how they get back to England and the documentary style is amazing because it's happened to a real person and you're filming them from behind, so they're not revealed who they are. And then it cuts to acting. It's very visual. So, you know, if it was hearing people speaking all the way through, it would be boring for me. But because it fits between the story and the acting. And it's really interesting how they portray that in the acting. So it's factual with drama. So it's kind of two in one. I think that'll be something I'd really like to be involved in. Maybe we could do our own deaf series. But I think that would be what I would want to be involved in.
Rebecca	Ooh yeah, so you'd wanna make a really hard-hitting documentary for the Deaf community, right? I think we all agree. Just seeing if we have any other questions. Ah, somebody wanted to ask Rinkoo. So do you have any more plans for filming or not just yet?
Rinkoo	Well, to be honest, I ... when I was making this film I was actually writing scripts for lots of different films and you know, I was loving the journey of going down the rabbit holes of all these incredible films and I've actually handed a lot of those in for bids, but I haven't been successful in getting funding for developing those projects. You know, there's lots of films and lots of ideas that I want to try and develop, but it's all dependent on the funding. You know, lots of funders have very strict criteria, and if my film happens to meet that criteria, then thankfully I can get funding. But you know, a lot of my stories come from abroad, from the journeys that I've had and the stories. And I've been told, you know, people telling me about these incredible experiences that they've had in India. But unfortunately, I'm not able to get funding for those exotic stories, you know. At the end of the day, I've got to try and pay out of my own pocket. But unfortunately, you know, I can't afford that and lots of my ideas are just are left to fester.
Rebecca	Maybe watch this space?
Rinkoo	Yeah, absolutely. I've got lots of stories that can draw an audience in. But you know, it's not necessarily just stories that can be filmed - they could be theatre productions as well. I've noticed that the theatre industry is a lot more open-minded and it's easier to fit their criteria and develop stories and, you know, filming and TV production can be really tough. BSLBT's great, but it's other organisations where it's really tough to get the funding to approve some of my fantastic stories. And so I'd like to see those restrictions eased a little bit so that I can develop some of these ideas.



Rebecca	I agree and we have had a comment from Shaz who has said they would love to see BSLBT create a film in the future. So perhaps, biographies of real deaf people from... historical figures... and they would be really interested in seeing that.
Charlie	We do have one drama coming up that we have recently just finished editing, which is historical. It's not based on real people, but it is based on true history and so the characters were created for the story. But I think that's a really exciting piece. And that's to follow on BSL Zone . And so we look for... I think that's going to be an excellent drama in the future. Actually I hadn't realised that I didn't say the name of it. It's called The Letter . So please look out for that.
Rebecca	Ooh it's a good film, Aimee said.
Charlie	Ooh, of course you were involved. I forgot you were involved, so sorry.
Aimee	I was.
Rebecca	Just a reminder for our audience members, if you're unsure whether or not to ask your question, please do send them in. We do have a question for all three of you from Caroline. For young deaf people who want to do the same as you, whether it's producing, directing or presenting, how do they get started? What do they do? What advice would you give to a young person?
Rinkoo	Well, for me, I would advise young people just to go for it. Do whatever you enjoy and then you'll make something amazing. You can use your phone, you can use your laptop, all sorts of technology that you've got at home to make something incredible, and you might start off with something small and develop it into something amazing. It's important for you to try to show the projects that you develop to the right people, network with the right sorts of people, right sorts of companies. You really don't have to have this high level of production, just experiment with lots of different ideas that you have and follow the feelings and emotions that you have in your body and let that guide your ideas.
Aimee	I agree. I also think the experience is important. So if you are looking to get into TV, you need to get in and see what it's like. Get that experience, volunteer. If there's a production company asking for people, or if you want to approach them and offer your work for free and start as a runner. And in film, that's the best place to start. You go and you see the different roles on set - the BSL monitor, the director, the camera crew and you can see where you want to work, where you can imagine yourself. So runner - your role is to make everyone tea and make everyone feel comfortable and you work your way up from that. With experience, I think the best way is to start as a runner.
Rebecca	Lovely. Thank you. Charlie?
Charlie	I would just to say I agree with Rinkoo and Aimee. It's not a fast process. You have to take it step by step and move forward. For myself, you know, thinking about filmmaking and script writing, and then I worked in different programmes. I worked in See Hear, I worked in BTB on Channel 4 a long time ago, and so you work in different environments and every time you take on perhaps a bigger project and so you build up that experience. You learn from your experience; you learn from your mistakes and constantly try and prove - you connect and be



	friends with people that you like working with. And it just gets better and better. But the journey is not a fast one. You just have to take it slowly and grow with it.
Rebecca	Brilliant. Thank you for that great advice from all of you. Ooh another addition from Shaz. So just thinking about BSL itself, what about if somebody is, you know, their English skills are not as strong as their BSL. Can they submit a script through BSL? What changes would they need to make, what do they do?
Charlie	Sorry, Rinkoo...
Rinkoo	No, no, go ahead, Charlie.
Charlie	So, with our programmes, we do have different ways and people previously have thought about the dialogue and outline of the story. And then we may have a different script writer working with a script editor. And it may well be that they have someone with very fluent BSL skills who is able to help them develop the English script. But I think the short answer is we always support someone depending on the needs. There is no one-size-fits-all. So we always try to match the writer's language needs in order to help develop the script.
Rebecca	Lovely. Rinkoo, did you want to add?
Rinkoo	Well, I agree with everything that Charlie is saying. There are a few options that you have you, you know, you could bring an interpreter on who is able to translate your BSL script into English. Another option is just write it in your own way. Don't worry about the formal structure or grammar of English, and then once you've written it your own way, bring the interpreter in later and have them make it clearer. So there's lots of different options out there. Don't be worried about the barriers that you may face. Try and overcome those.
Charlie	I would agree with that as well. You don't need to have perfect English, it's the story and the characters and the scenes that are in your head, the imagination that you have. The writing is just a way for you to put that image onto the page so that people can read it. The English does not have to be perfect.
Rebecca	That's really useful to know. Thank you. Aimee?
Aimee	I might be going a little bit off the point, but thinking about English and BSL Rinkoo, your documentary had off-screen BSL. With most hearing documentaries, they have the person voicing over and there might be trees in the view, but the subtitles still have the person talking in the background. So, your subtitles show what you would have been signing, and this is new, but we're not actually seeing you sign. So if people don't understand English, how do they access that part of your documentary?
Rinkoo	Is that a question for me? Oh, alright. Well, I didn't expect that question to come in from you, Aimee. It's a completely unique way of working. The film focuses on a more artistic way of signing rather than just signing, you know, in a conversational style where people will just eventually get bored of, and overwhelmed by all these signs. I wanted to bring in this artistic perspective and, we live in in 2023, and lots of deaf people rely on subtitles. And I think the stat is that, you know, 5 to 10% of subtitles are missed by deaf people. The idea is that I was signing throughout and then the subtitles were provided as a translation, and, as you



	say, the signing wasn't on screen. It was a pan shot and then the subtitles were still there to give the audience a break.
Aimee	Yeah. No, I liked it, it was a really new way of working. Thank you.
Charlie	<p>I think there's a really big debate around this. I think previously people felt you have to see the BSL all the time, but I think directors are now starting to feel, why do they have to be restricted by this? We always see full frontal direct to camera BSL. And I think, can we do it in a more artistic way? Can we focus on the faces in a different way, or have a different kind of street locations and visuals. I think Rinkoo's right that deaf people are used to reading subtitles and only a very small percentage of people don't.</p> <p>I think it's actually really effective. And every director wants to bring something different. You don't want to feel like you have to have 100% of two camera BSL the whole time, and then another director kind of going, "I'm only going to be using subtitles." What we really need is people to be different because at the end of the day it's artistic expression - we need to be flexible in the way we do this.</p>
Rinkoo	Yes, absolutely. I feel as though I have to think about empathy when I'm watching a programme and you know, I can't remember everything that's being signed to me. It's so overwhelming that I'm not able to take all the information on board. So that's why it's important to have those pan shots, those artistic shots to give the audience time to relax and process the message that they've just received. You know, I think that's a better way for the deaf audience to engage with the show.
Rebecca	Well, this actually links in nicely to our next question. So here's a nice question from Linda. Just asking what is your favourite deaf drama or documentary that you've seen or made recently, so something that's already been made and that's out there ...
Charlie	Well, I would have to say that one drama that everyone has talked about is The End . And that's perhaps 12 years ago now. It was made by director and writer Ted Evans. And that was fantastic because it made people think about the future and the Deaf community and Deaf identity. It was very interesting, very different. So for me that's one I often come back to and think about.
Rebecca	Right, Aimee or Rinkoo?
Rinkoo	I'm just thinking wow, does it have to be BSL Zone or could it be all sorts of deaf films? Deaf drama?
Rebecca	A deaf drama or documentary.
Aimee	Documentary or drama. I've got one that I will never forget. Small World - Chris Baker - I will never forget his character. It was just, you know, we still copy his acting sometimes, you'll never forget him. And that was released ... but sometimes you just think about him, don't you? Yeah. I loved it.
Charlie	And actually, Aimee, you're lucky because that character will come back in a programme soon. So we're working on that at the moment.



Aimee	Ooh, I can't wait.
Rebecca	Rinkoo, have you thought of one?
Rinkoo	Ooh, I'm still just thinking. There is one film that's fantastic, but it's an Indian film. You know, the actors in it are actually hearing so... there's another film called Black , which is a film with a deafblind person in it, and it's a really impactful story. But, you know, it's a deafblind character, but unfortunately, a hearing actor.
Rebecca	Oh, that's great, I. Mean maybe you could have said that your documentary is the favourite, the best?
Rinkoo	Well, I didn't want to be big-headed.
Charlie	You were thinking about different documentaries from the past, or Double Discrimination 10 years ago. I thought that was a fantastic documentary as well. So I think you've been involved in two very good documentaries so far. And so we need to get the triple now. I'm looking forward to the third one.
Rebecca	Well, I've really enjoyed having such a lovely conversation with you all tonight. Thank you very much for your honest answers and for your advice and a reminder for our audience members, please remember to watch Birmingham Made Me , Rinkoo's documentary. You can watch it on our website or our app now. Thank you very much for all your questions and engagement. Have a lovely evening.
All	Thank you, goodnight.