

The DOWN AND OUTS



Logline

In the winner-take-all world of mixed martial arts, we follow the lowest-ranked fighters from the lowest-ranked gym in town, where losing is the name of the game.

World

The underbelly of this fighting world is rich with comedy and pain. Down here, we see failure more often than we see success. There's a gallows humour that accompanies these fighters as they trudge along to another town hall where they will inevitably get beaten up by someone faster, stronger, and somehow, often better looking than them.

That's the world of this show: old, piss-soaked parochial halls filled with piss-drunk fans. Damp, dreary gyms, where rain can appear to manifest indoors. Dressing rooms that double as dirty toilets. Weigh-ins in your underpants. And small-time press conferences where your opponent calls you a "bum" and, in your head, you tend to agree.

It is rich in the sense that we are seeing fighters in conflict with themselves as well as the world. It can be multi-layered in the way we follow their fighting lives as well as their personal lives at home. And it is renewable because there is always another fight on the cards, if you're lucky.

Themes

The story is centered around fighting both in a literal and metaphorical sense, showing the world of fighting but also expanding on the ways we all have to fight in our everyday lives. We can dig into why exactly these characters fight competitively, when they are most often fighting to lose, but we can also explore what they are fighting for outside of the ring.

Some people fight for love, others for respect. Some people are fighting to put food on the table, or custody of their children. Others fight because it's all they know, or all they want. Some people can fight with themselves and everyone around them, while others can't seem to fight at all.

This morning, I fought with my wheelie bin after it tipped over when I went to throw in a bag of rubbish. "This is typical!", I said. The wheelie bin did not respond.

Everyday is a struggle.

Cast of Characters

This is an ensemble piece that focuses on the fighters you don't see. The journeymen. The jobbers. The stiff. Let's face it, the bums. Professional losers who provide a service by losing so reliably and helping other fighters to pad their records and forward their careers.

There's no shortage of colourful characters in the world of fighting and I would like to explore a lot of them through shifting the POV of the show to offer different insights into why these people fight. We could look at the gym owner who has tasted professional success in her past but is now banished to teaching this sorry bunch.

There's the underachievers and the plain lazy. The uncoordinated ones and the glass cannons. There's the one with the chip on his shoulder and the one with the dream. The one with the Napoleon complex and the gentle giant.

There's the lover, not a fighter. The bloodthirsty one and the Bruce Lee fanatic. There's the one with the better older brother and there's the family-man who tries to hide his black eyes from his wife. There's the old caretaker who feels sorry for them all and there's the sleazy promoter, looking to make a quick buck by throwing one of these lambs to the slaughter.

Character Arc

Anthony O' Keefe is our central character. He is 5 foot 11 inches, weighing in at 155 pounds with a record of five wins and five losses. That even record is about to become a losing one if his current skid continues.

We meet him at a low point, just after a loss, where everything hurts more. The dream appears to be over. He's starting to regret having spent the last five years getting beat up for peanuts. No qualifications other than half a year of college and the ability to throw a somewhat rusty roundhouse kick. He wonders where it all went wrong? What made the fire inside him go out?

He feels embarrassed at the thought of throwing in the towel, and regret for having left it so late. But somewhere deep down there's something telling him he's not done yet.

Can he make a comeback from his newfound "bum" status? Does he have it in him to become a contender? How hard is it to change the course of your life when you are being punched in the face at every turn?

Series Arc

Anthony is the "straight man" to our gym full of colourful characters. His reignited passion for fighting inspires a sort of "Rising of the Bums", where this downtrodden group of perennial losers attempts to win back their self-respect.

The stakes are upped by Anthony's coach when she lays down an ultimatum, "Win your next fight or you're gone." Now he has to prove to her, as well as himself, that he still belongs in this world.

The main plotline of the series would follow the leadup to a local "**Fight Night**" event where the characters from our gym are slated to appear as heavy underdogs. As with most previous events, they are expected to lose.

However, after Anthony's inspiring turnaround in training, the bums from our gym are going into this one with a higher level of confidence than they are used to. They might just shock the world.

Or, well, the local parish anyway.

After years and years of thinking, "This ain't my night", what if, just for one night.... it was.

I relate a lot to this feeling of chasing a dream while, in the back of my mind, wondering am I truly up to it. Thankfully, my dream is a lot less hazardous than that of our characters.

No one is going around punching screenwriters. I mean, I hope not.

Audience

I think the show could have a broad appeal. It's like **Rocky** meets **The Inbetweeners**. I think fans of the FX show **Atlanta** would appreciate its loosely-plotted nature and how it has the ability to veer off track and place it's POV in interesting and unexpected places. Also, I feel people who enjoy **Stath Lets Flats** would be taken in by our cast of weirdos operating, often calamitously, in their own chaotic little world of fighting.

"I coulda' had class, I coulda' been a contender, I could've been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am" - Terry Molloy, "**On The Waterfront**"

"Even though he was an enemy of mine, I had to admit that what he had accomplished was a brilliant piece of strategy. First, he punched me, then he kicked me, then he punched me again." - Jack Handey, "**Deep Thoughts**"

