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Just Passing Through: The Greatest TV Show Not On TV

[interview](#) | December 17, 2013 by [IvyKnight](#) | [8 Comments](#)

Filmmaker Jeremy Larter grew up on Prince Edward Island, now he lives with his girlfriend Jill in a basement apartment in the Annex, working tirelessly to make a tv show about Prince Edward Islanders, one of the most unique yet underrepresented populations in the country, as far as non-Anne of Green Gables shit is concerned.

The PEI of Larter's riotous new comedy series, [Just Passing Through](#), is a place populated by stunned arseholes, pogeys narcs and skanks. Here the moonshine flows like water, unemployment insurance is a way of life, and bar fights after last call are de rigeur. Larter is celebrating all of that, bringing the hilarious reality of the average Islander to the rest of the country. The first season of the show is available on YouTube and was recently written up in the [Globe and Mail](#), where John Doyle referred to it as "hilarious and more cutting than any of the slick sitcoms made for Canadian TV in recent years."

If you haven't yet seen it please watch the preview of the show before continuing on to my interview with Jeremy Larter



You have a number of web series up on YouTube, all set in and about PEI, why is that? Why make Islanders the focus?

Islanders are still hanging their hat on Anne of Green Gables and Confederation. Confederation was 100 years ago. I looked it up, it was written in 1908. You have to create new cultural icons and form a new cultural identity at some point. Newfoundland has been really successful at it, I don't know why PEI hasn't been.

Do you blame the Ghiz family (former premier Joe Ghiz, current premier is son Robert Ghiz) for this?

The Ghiz's? Bloody Ghiz! Actually I was a huge Joe Ghiz supporter when I was like six years old. I loved Joe Ghiz.

I just think that it's about time that we start to form a new 21st century identity. PEI Tourism is stagnating. We're going to have a big party next year for the 150th anniversary of Confederation. No wait, the anniversary of the meeting! They're spending five million dollars to have a year long party about the meeting of Confederation! In three years they're gonna have a big party for actual Confederation. It's half a sham because PEI didn't even join Confederation until ten years later and the only reason why they did is because they bankrupted themselves building the railroad, so the embrace of Confederation is kinda ridiculous.



Jeremy Larter

What kind of feedback had you been getting on *Just Passing Through* prior to the mention in the *Globe*?

The feedback that we get from Islanders is that they're proud. Seeing the show makes them proud to be an Islander. In the Maritimes the culture is very similar but we have distinct differences. In Newfoundland and Nova Scotia they're just willing to shine the light on that in shows like the *Trailer Park Boys* and *Codco*.



the cast of Just Passing Through

How did it all start? Where did the idea for the show come from?

Just Passing Through came from my buddy Geoff Read and I watching the classic Canadian film [Goin' Down the Road](#) and watching [the SCTV sketches that John Candy and Joe Flaherty did spoofing](#) Goin; Down the Road. In the film there's a scene where the two Maritimers land in Toronto at their aunt and uncle's house. The aunt and uncle are peering out the window looking at the two guys bang on the door. They won't answer the door, they are looking at the flame painted shitbox car that the guys are driving and they won't let them in. Then the Maritimers go off on their way but Geoff and I thought that if the aunt and uncle let the Maritimers in they'd basically be living in sitcom world. So we started watching lots of episodes of Perfect Strangers and Three's Company.

So you made a hilarious comedy from what has been referred to as one of the most depressing movies ever made? I mean Goin' Down the Road makes [Midnight Cowboy](#) look like [Barefoot in the Park](#).

Ha, yes Goin' Down The Road is wonderfully bleak and real but you could take those characters and drop them in a sitcom and it would still work great. But that working-class Maritimer experience of the 70's, heading out to Toronto to find wicked jobs, is over. It's forty years later and what Maritimers do now, they don't go to Toronto for work they go to Alberta for work. So we thought the timing of it would be perfect because that same story of Maritimers going west is happening now but they go a lot further west than they used to. So that's where the seed of the idea started from.



Terry (Dennis Trainor) and Parnell (Robbie Moses)

How did you cast *Just Passing Through*? How did you find the leads Terry and Parnell Gallant?

We did a casting session in Toronto in July of 2012 and we cast our three main Toronto leads from here. Dennis Trainor and I have known each other for years, we've done a lot of short films together and Dennis did a lot of sketch stuff and theatre stuff in PEI. He's in a sketch troupe called [Sketch 22](#). Robbie and I did a twenty episode web series called [PEI Ponderings](#) together and I've known Robbie for about five or ten years. Initially we were worried because on paper the first few drafts of the scripts Terry and Parnell basically seemed interchangeable, it was hard to distinguish between the two guys. But Dennis and Robbie are very different people, Dennis can ramp it up quite high when he needs to and Robbie's just got a natural sweetness to him. When we made Parnell a little bit dumber than Terry then we really found the two characters. We gave Parnell a moustache, not an ironic moustache, but a moustache moustache. We shaved his sideburns, the way my dad does. No burns! Shaved straight across from the top, that's the standard Island middle-aged man look.



The Maritme Mafia: the Scotian, the Newf & the New Brunswikker

We cast them in August then we wrote from September all the way through to shooting, which was February. The writing process was quite long cuz we'd never written a show before. We weren't supposed to make full length episodes originally, we were funded to do 10 minute episodes, but once we started getting into the writing process and ideas were combining, then Arrested Development was going to be coming out on Netflix. Netflix was starting to put out full length shows and Geoff* and I were like I think this is probably the future. If our goal is to get a show to be broadcast on television, if we want to make a career out of this we might as well take the risk and try to make a full length.

How did you get your funding?

That was through the [Independent Production Fund](#) and [Innovation PEI](#). The IPF is a private fund and they fund 10-15 different web series every year, they've been doing that since 2010. I was a finalist with 2 different projects in the 2 previous years but never got through. Originally there are 150 projects that are submitted then they narrow it down to 30, then pick 10-15. We got it in 2012.

Well, my hat is off to IPF, what a great program! So there are seven episodes of the show available for viewing now, what's happening? How long do we have to wait for more?

We're already in the process of writing the second season bible. We've had interest from a few different production companies. I've been getting word that there are broadcasters looking at it right now. It's exciting, I know not to get my hopes up but it seems like something could happen.



We're going to make shirts and try to generate some revenue to help with the second season. We'll be instantly eligible for second season funding with IPF. We'll be a finalist and if the series does well we'll probably meet the standard to get funding through them again. Worst case scenario if we don't get picked up for broadcast we'll still be able to get some funding. We'd like to be shooting the second season in July of 2014. And we want to make Pogey Beach, people are clamoring for more of Pogey Beach. We might try a [Kickstarter](#) or something to try and get funding to do that.

MONCTON



ARSEHOLE of the MARITIMES!

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Do you have a community of ex-pat Islanders around you out here?

Oh yeah huge. We were thinking we should make a PEI embassy in Toronto. I have probably a dozen friends from high school that are in Toronto. If we want to have a bowling night with Islanders we can get like twenty or twenty-five people out. We stick together in the big city. When I first came to Toronto I found it hard to make friends here. The thing that I notice about Islanders every time I go back is how open they are there, like you go into Shoppers Drug Mart and the cashier will tell you about problems she had with her boyfriend the night before. You're just getting a pack of gum and she's going on. The openness that people have there, I miss that. Torontonians seem a little more guarded, they're kinda closed in a little bit and they talk about themselves A LOT. That could just be me though.

No, I think you're right about Toronto, but I think that could be said of any big city. I agree with you about the openness of Islanders but do you really want to hear about the cashier's boyfriend every time you go to Shoppers?

Haha! No. Get the [Magnums](#) and leave quick.



The Alpine Oracle

What can we expect for the next season?

They're all gonna go to PEI. It won't be the whole season, a significant part of the season will be in Toronto but they're all going to end up taking a road trip to PEI. The last two to four episodes will be set on the East Coast. We want to shoot on Poge Beach, which is actually Tracadie Beach**. We want to include flea markets and benefit dances, they're so big on the Island. The benefit dance culture is getting into bizarre territory now, you're seeing some really weird benefits for people where you don't really know what's going on, people who aren't really sick, they just kinda want some money. We're gonna play on that a little bit. We'll include my neck of the woods too, Tracadie Wharf and Covehead, all that. It's a lot easier to write the second season than it was to write the first. Once you have the foundation you can build off it a lot easier.

Fun Fact: Culinary legend [Grant Soto](#) aka Taylor Clarke helped write one of the episodes in season 1.

Do you have a favourite line from the first season?

“There's lots of good jobs in Moncton” sticks out for me because that's in the first scene. It's great to hear people quoting lines back to us. When we were making it, it never occurred to us that people might one day quote the lines. I like “Moncton is the arsehole of the Maritimes” too. Poor Moncton.

“She's about as European as a Pontiac Sunfire”, also the bit about the “touch of lavender” is hilarious.

When can we expect to be watching the second season?

Best case scenario, maybe a year from now.

Holy Jesus. Guess we'll just have to survive on reruns til then.

Yes, the reruns will have to tide you over for a spell but you can watch my other web shows Ponderings, Profile PEI and Leafs Beefs on my [YouTube channel](#). You'll see lots of familiar faces from Just Passing Through in our old stuff.

*co-creators/writers/co-producers of the show are Geoff Read and Jeremy's brother Jason Larter, with Robbie Moses also on the writing team.

**Aaron Rogerson, you beautiful ginger, I will never forget our magical night together in the dunes of Tracadie in grade 11.

Tags: [anne of green gables](#), [codco](#), [covehead](#), [cradle of confederation](#), [dennis trainor](#), [geoff read](#), [goin' down the road](#), [grant soto](#), [Ivy](#), [jason larter](#), [jeremy larter](#), [joe ghiz](#), [john doyle](#), [just passing through](#), [moonshine](#), [pei](#), [pogey beach](#), [pogey narc](#), [Prince Edward Island](#), [robbie mooses](#), [robert ghiz](#), [SCTV](#), [skank](#), [stunned arsehole](#), [taylor clarke](#), [terry and parnell gallant](#), [tracadie beach](#), [unemployment insurance](#)

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Ell Tee

December 20, 2013 at 6:21 pm <#>

PEI Ponderings is a frigging masterpiece. It will suck you in.

[Reply](#)



IvyKnight

December 20, 2013 at 7:58 pm <#>

Ponderings is brilliant!

[Reply](#)



Louise Lalonde

December 20, 2013 at 7:08 pm <#>

A year? Really? Fun interview.

[Reply](#)



o

IvyKnight

December 20, 2013 at 7:58 pm <#>

I know. I don't think I can survive a whole year without Terry and Parnell

[Reply](#)



3.

Robert

December 20, 2013 at 7:48 pm <#>

PEI Ponderings is hilarious...and I have to admit, I watched every episode of Profile PEI too. The "Littlest Hobo" spoof was brilliant. "here boy, nice strong boy, put the wood in the barn boy" 😄

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o

IvyKnight

December 20, 2013 at 7:57 pm <#>

JerBear and Kellster!!!

[Reply](#)



4.

Rob

December 22, 2013 at 1:23 am <#>

My favorite line by far is "Owen's gonna pop is Pogey Cherry !"

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Ivy Knight
 📍 5 Big Foodie

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