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Chrisjan Apollus

TV Producer

A Television Producer is responsible for a TV show's overall quality and ensures that all production activities stay on schedule. From inception to completion, they create, organise and support the shooting of a television project.

Meet 35-year old Chrisjan Apollus, a seasoned TV Producer, employed by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation. Chrisjan has overcome many obstacles in living his passion. This is his story.

Challenging Childhood

Chrisjan Apollus is a Katutura boy, born and bred.

A product of the A. Shipena High School where he completed Grade 12, Chrisjan's teenage years were not easy. Convinced that his late stepfather did not like him, he started to isolate himself from his

family.

However, in his search for acceptance, he ended up with the wrong crowd. Not knowing how to deal with the peer pressure, Chrisjan got involved in petty crimes, in and around the neighbourhood.

"I was somehow convinced that my friends understood me better. Instead, they pressured me into doing 'naughty' things and I eventually ended up in front of a Magistrate, facing jailtime. It all changed when I walked into the courtroom and saw my mother with tears in her eyes. And I thought to myself, this should never happen again", he recalls.

A New Page

Turning his life around wasn't easy, but Chrisjan's faith pulled him through. He also realised that



his stepfather was merely trying to instill in him a strong sense of discipline and an appreciation for what is right and wrong. “Staying out of trouble was very difficult, because there was nobody guiding and mentoring me on what not to do. My stepfather believed that if you spared the rod, you spoiled the child. I guess at a point I simply became too scared to do wrong. The hidings I got helped in instilling the self-discipline I needed at the time”, Chrisjan shares.

Chrisjan also started focusing his energies on more productive and positive activities. Always the entertainer and storyteller, it came as no surprise to the family when he enrolled for drama classes. He auditioned at the Bricks Committed Artists Group who recognised his talent and handed him a few roles in some of its productions.

Big Break

Soon, Chrisjan’s big break came. He landed the role as the young Sam

Nujoma in the autobiographical motion picture about the life of the Founding Father. “Next thing I know, I was sitting next to Hollywood icon, Danny Glover. Imagine, this young boy with nothing in his life sitting next to this famous actor”, he shares.

His performance in ‘Where Others Wavered’ led to an offer to visit the United States, where Chrisjan was approached by an agent to sign up for more acting roles. However, after a lot of introspection and arriving at the conclusion that he was more comfortable behind, than in front of the cameras, Chrisjan turned down the offer and returned home, enrolling at the College of the Arts for a course in Television Production. “I realised I had very little capacity in operating a camera and the College of the Arts had an amazing programme with a very strong practical component”, he says.

Chrisjan excelled in his training under the tutelage of veteran

TV producer, Ted Scott. After graduating from the College of the Arts, he participated in further training opportunities at the then Polytechnic of Namibia and at the Cape Technikon in South Africa.

World of Work

The nbc initially employed Chrisjan as a Video Editor, responsible for assembling recorded video footage into finished television programmes that match the director’s vision and is suitable for broadcasting. “Ultimately, as a film and video editor, you bring sight and sound together in order to tell a cohesive story. It’s just one of my many skills”, he says. “However, my seniors soon recognised my potential and pushed me into producing programmes, because that was what I’ve been doing prior to joining the nbc’s TV Programmes Department”, Chrisjan adds.

Today, Chrisjan has established himself as one of the nbc’s leading producers, respected by his

peers and production teams as a dedicated and focused team leader. As a Senior Producer responsible for the production of a popular agricultural programme called ‘Green Horizons’, Chrisjan is also often called in to assist in the planning and production of documentary and special feature programmes. “I am known as Mr. Green Horizons. It’s an important programme. Not only does it highlight the growing importance of the agricultural sector, it also plays a big role in educating Namibians about efficient and productive farming methods”, he explains.

Creative Passion

Television production can be very demanding. It requires creativity and strong organisation skills. Producers often work long, unpredictable hours in a high-stress environment. Other than good communication, financial and managerial skills, producers also need to have an understanding of the latest camera and editing

technology. They must thrive under the pressures of deadlines, while scriptwriting and great storytelling skills is also a key prerequisite.

Chrisjan doesn't mind the unpredictable hours and deadlines. "TV Production is my passion. It gives me a heartbeat. It's similar to seeing a beautiful girl you admire. Everytime you see her your heart skips a beat. This is how I feel when I'm behind the camera. When I get the perfect shot, you'll see me jump up and down from excitement. It's a romantic process", he explains. "When I'm in my 'heartbeat' zone, I lose track of time; I'm in a different world. And it tells me that what I'm doing is what I love", he adds.

Training Advocate

Chrisjan appreciates that he is a rolemodel to young Namibians wishing to carve out a career in the television production industry. His industry peers appreciate him as an individual that always makes time for young producers, sharing advice and encouraging them to work even harder.

"I tell everyone wishing to enter this industry that there is a difference between influence and passion. Influence is you wanting to do it because others are doing it. Passion is you doing something because you love doing it. If your heart and soul is not in your work, then

you're not passionate about it", he explains.

"When you work in this trade you are not doing it for yourself, you are doing it for the entertainment of others. I did not have grey hair when I started out. But, it requires a lot of thinking and creativity in many aspects, while handling the camera, while engineering the sound, while in your editing suite, even while talking to people. You need to find creative ways to talk to someone to get the best out of that person. Otherwise, your production suffers", he adds.

Away from the nbc's production studios, Chrisjan enjoys spending time with his wife and children. Married life has brought a new passion - Cooking! And often

you will find Chrisjan donning his apron and trying out new recipes. "Cooking is a shared passion. Between my wife and I, and my mother who stays with us, we often try to come up with new dishes. It's a bit of a competition. And I'm winning", he notes. His mother, Christina, too remains a key part of Chrisjan's support system.

Chrisjan Apollus. A creative,

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