

BROADCAST

Jules Hussey: why I quit producing

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Ralph & Katie and Guilt producer sets out her reasons for focusing on fledgling indie Brazen

I have had the honour of producing some dramas I have been so proud of My Mad Fat Diary, Babs', Guilt and most recently Ralph & Katie. I've worked with some great teams, travelled the world and also tried to make some positive changes to attitudes and processes.

So when I [announced on Twitter last week](#) that I no longer want to produce it surprised quite a few people and I want to explain why.



Jules Hussey

After being a line producer on shows including Silent Witness, Call the Midwife and Five Daughters for 12 years, I declared that I wanted to become a producer only to be repeatedly told that I was not 'creative enough'.

In that era, producers came up through the script editor ranks.

A line producer with knowledge of the floor, budgets, schedules, people management and crisis management was not considered to have the necessary skills to step up to producing.

Thanks to Tony Jordan and Red Planet I was finally given a shot on BBC1 single The Ark, shot in Morocco – and I believe partly because I refused to line produce it. Tony, Belinda and Alex's trust at Red Planet set me on the path to producing – a job that I enjoyed for many years.

Six years later, I found myself at a Sky drama roundtable with a dozen agents, executive producers, development producers, production company owners, commissioning editors and freelance producers.

A debate about producers concluded that there was no place for the role (as it was then) in drama anymore.

And since then the situation has continued to change and, from my perspective, worsen.

The growing number of exec producers - including showrunners, writers and actors, co-production partners and script editors - means that there are already many 'creative voices'.

The creativity I was told I needed to become a producer several years before is no longer a requirement.

Producers are seen not as creatives or collaborators but firefighters, fixers, HR, doers. One producer told me how hard it is for her to secure a contract that allows her to work in post - she is seen as only needed for the shoot when the weather is bad and you are away from home and working long hours, dealing with a cast and crew of 80 (or many more) people.

As a producer, I have been told by a director that they didn't know what I would do on their shoot as they didn't care about my opinion.

I have been told not to speak to the writers.

I have been accused of stealing the company's money by asking for a sixth day's payment having worked a 12 day week!

It's worth saying that I have also produced shows which are genuine collaborations, where everyone's voice is heard and where the end result has been award-winning and life affirming.

But these projects are the exceptions that prove the rule.

So, when I announced on Twitter that I no longer want to produce I wasn't saying: 'I'm giving up the industry'.

I was saying: 'I want to co-create, not just fix. I don't want to firefight, I want to make sparks. I want to lead a team that works with respect and trust for everyone and which lets everyone have voice'.

The industry is in constant flux and the producer role may change again but at the age of 54 I have realised what I want to be when I grow up. I want to be an exec producer.

A few years ago, I decided to use my Hussey name to my advantage and set up Brazen Productions to co-create, rather than collaborate. That's what I plan to do.

Hopefully next year Brazen will be looking for a producer... with a voice.