AUDIENCE AND EMOJIS

A #TheRealColdtown Post-Mortem

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This is a post-mortem of the live-action role-playing piece *#TheRealColdtown* written by Julia B. Ellingboe and Kat Jones. Originally created for BlackBox Copenhagen 2019, scenario writers were explicitly encouraged to create works that integrated an audience into the blackbox format. Inspired by the YA novel *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, *#TheRealColdtown* included ten pre-written player characters and a ten-person audience that took on the role of Social Media during the game. Using "emoji cards," audience members responded in real time to player characters during structured role-play scenes. They also were able to ask questions and make comments during *social media interludes* that took place between the focused scenes.

The scenario ran three times: at BlackBox CPH, at Intercon 2019, and at Big Bad Con 2019. This post-mortem will focus particularly on the challenges of integrating an audience into a live-action scenario, examining the various iterations that the game went through to more effectively engage the audience, and the limitations presented by the live-action role-playing format.

#THEREALCOLDTOWN: ABOUT THE SCENARIO

Inspired by the novel *Coldest Girl in Coldtown* by Holly Black, this scenario tells the story of a group of characters who are

living in or traveling to a Coldtown, a quarantined city where vampires and humans dwell. Five of the ten player characters are driving to the Coldtown, including four teenage humans and one vampire. Five of the ten player characters are actually living in the Coldtown. Some are human, some are vampires, many of them are the social media stars that the other group is watching.

#TheRealColdtown: Player Info

The Cast

On the Road-trip to Coldtown:

Shori Brooks: A teenager bitten by a vampire. Wise beyond their years. Loves vampire fiction but hates the fixation with Coldtowns and real vamps.

Lee Montoya: A wild child who was also bitten by a vampire. Shori's ex. Not excited about having to go to Coldtown. Related to Montoya in Coldtown.

Tommy Rheinfeldt: The Podcaster. Their podcast *The Night Inside* focuses on vampires and Coldtowns.
This character will have a significant social media presence during the game.

Aubrey: The Social Media Influencer. Their Youtube channel *Leaves Look Pale* focuses on Coldtown makeup and fashion.
This character will have a significant social media presence during the game.

Enos Blaire/Gabriel Thorne: A Mysterious Vampire with a past. Rejects the romanticized images of vampires coming from the Coldtowns. Doesn't trust the Coldtown system but wants to see what's really going on there.

Already in Coldtown:

Safiyya al-Baghdadiyya: (woman) Vampire Influencer--famous makeup influencer,PR machine for the vampires. Less well known for her poetry.
This character will have a significant social media presence during the game.

G. Milton-Lloyd:(man) venture capitalist, real estate mogul, exploits humans and vampires, *not a nice guy*. Think Elon Musk but with less of a conscience.

Leslie Goddard: A teen and Wannabe Vampire.Documents the awesome life in the Coldtown. No one will turn them into a vampire.
This character will have a significant social media presence during the game.

D. Summers: stuck in Coldtown when it was quarantined--on twitter as #RealColdtown. Scandal caused by displaying open hatred of vampires.
This character will have a significant social media presence during the game.

Montoya: Owns Mariachi Shoe Repair. Helps out the human community in the Coldtown. Distrusts people in power. Related to Lee Montoya.
No social media presence at all.

Image 1: List of #TheRealColdtown Characters

The scenario is structured as a prologue and two acts. The

prologue functions as both an introduction to the world and a workshop to allow players to practice the mechanics for simulating social media that are used during the game. The first act focuses on the road trip to the Coldtown, juxtaposed with scenes from the characters within the Coldtown. At the start of the second act, the teenagers arrive in Coldtown and meet the other characters.

One of the main themes of the scenario is social media and the depiction of reality. Scenes are a mix of "in real life" (*irl*) interactions and simulations of the characters' social media videos and posts. Through the metaphor of the Coldtown, the scenario is also meant to be a commentary on white flight, ghettoization, and gentrification of urban spaces. The scenes in Act One were all pre-generated, while Act Two was meant to be more improvised, giving facilitators more freedom to follow plot threads that arose in Act One.

Scenes:
Act 1:

Scene 1a, Roadtrip #1: Seating assignments--make the space uncomfortable.

Interlude (Roadtrip): Aubrey or Tommy announcing their trip

Scene 1b, Coldtown #1: Mariachi Shoe Repair (just the Coldtown folks)

Interlude (Coldtown): The first #TheRealColdtown post by Dawn/Don

2a(Roadtrip): Aubrey attempts to make a video-- how do the others react?

Interlude (Roadtrip): Aubrey's breakdown of Safiyya's look from a past Meat Market party

2b(Coldtown): Meat Market--Leslie's last attempt to become a vampire (Leslie and Safiyya)

Audience (who opt in) play vampires

Interlude (Coldtown): Safiyya's flattered reply to Aubrey's tutorial and invitation to the Coldtown

3a, Roadtrip: Car breaks down--fix it first or document it? Chaos-- if they don't fix the car then the cops show up. Cop alert on social media.

Audience plays cops.

(Short 5 min max.)

Interlude: Text/Tweet/FB post from Shori or Lee about their trip (what do they tell people is happening?)

3b, Coldtown: The Library, Milton Lloyd "offers" to buy the Mariachi Shoe Repair

4, Roadtrip/Coldtown: Who meets them at the Sears? (The Sears is closed!!) How is the reality of the Coldtown life demonstrated by the Coldtown characters?

Interludes for Act 2: AMA for the characters (similar to the "hot seat" meta-technique)

Act 2:
Scene 1: Mariachi Shoe Repair

Scene 2: The Library Salon (Freeze frame to highlight different meetings)

Scene 3: Meat Market: Document what Coldtown is *really* about. Is what they show everybody else reflecting their own ideas? Tie it into social media.

Scene 4: Epilogue: the Coldtown has gone Dark. No more social media. Audience gets to respond with what they think has happened. What is your life now? What are you doing?

(Monologues in the Dark--30 seconds per monologue)

If the character is dead (like *really* dead), just say, "I'm dead."

Only Milton-Lloyd (and possibly Rheinfeldt) can leave.

Image 2: Scene List for #TheRealColdtown, BlackBox Copenhagen Run.

Several scenes focus on the juxtaposition of the actual conditions within the Coldtown and the version presented on social media for consumption by outsiders. Social media was an incredibly important aspect of the novel *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* and one of the aspects that got us interested in adapting the material. We initially considered using actual social media or a digital

simulation such as a Discord server for the social media aspect of the scenario. As we began drafting the scenario as one with a social media audience playing the role of a Greek chorus commenting on the actions taken by the players, we decided that simulating social media in a more live-action or analog way would work better for our purposes. We had some concerns about how using actual social media might impact the experience; this included concerns about privacy, previous experience with international larps that relied heavily on digital media and experiencing technical and bandwidth issues, and the difficulty of designing the tech while also play-testing the scenario itself. Additionally, we had played other larps that had attempted various simulations of social media (with varying amounts of success) and worried that relying on digital media would result in the audience and players spending most of the game on their phones, which seemed counter to the live-action role-playing experience.

While some people have the wealth and resources to protect themselves within the Coldtown, for many others existence is much less pleasant as they face limited resources, non-existent infrastructure, and threats of violence from vampires or other humans. While some of the characters traveling to the Coldtown hold romanticized notions fueled by their consumption of social media, several of the other characters are more skeptical about the reality of the Coldtown they are traveling to. Characters within the Coldtown also have differing relationships to social media: the vampire Safiyya uses social media to portray the Coldtown as a fun and glamorous space for humans and vampires; local human resident D. Summers uses their twitter account #RealColdtown to portray the struggles of human residents in the Coldtown; and Montoya, a local human resident, tries their hardest to have no social media presence at all.

Written initially for BlackBox CPH 2019, *#TheRealColdtown* is meant to accommodate an interactive audience. Audience

members watch the actions of the player characters but also portray the general social media audience. The participants in the audience do not play full characters during the game but are asked to respond to simulated "social media" posts during the game with monologues or questions and participate in the opening workshops to practice these interactions.

The main social media mechanics in the initial run were *emoji cards* and *social media interludes.* The *emoji cards* were 8×11" cards with an emoji printed on them. The emoji cards featured a range commonly used emojis: happy, sad, angry, celebratory, as well as a few emojis more tailored to the scenario including vampires, coffins, and a red shoe (because of the local hangout in the Coldtown known as the Mariachi Shoe Repair). These cards could be held up by audience members as a way of reacting to the player characters' actions. The form that these responses took changed over the various iterations, from being used during all play in the first iteration to being used only during *social media scenes* in the subsequent iterations. *Social media interludes* were used in between *irl* scenes in the initial run, but expanded to *social media scenes* in subsequent iterations, these scenes took place in a unique location in the play space. In the initial run *social media interludes* were largely determined in advance, such as a call for social media influencer Aubrey to announce their roadtrip, or a video response to Aubrey by the vampire Safiyya inviting Aubrey to Coldtown. Subsequent runs allowed players who were not in a current *irl* scene to run *social media scenes* for the audience that they generated on their own.

Image 3: Run-time photo of #TheRealColdtown from Intercon S.

RUN ONE: BLACKBOX CPH 2019

BlackBox CPH is an experimental larp festival that takes place in Copenhagen. In 2019 the call for larps asked specifically for designs that incorporated an audience in some way.

Blackbox Design features some unique aspects in terms of live-action role-playing (Blackbox Design, n.d.). Blackbox larps use theatrical forms of expression such as lighting, sound, scenography, and props. Blackbox larps are meant to be accessible to newcomers, and everything needed to play the larp should take place in workshops before the scenario begins. Blackbox larps focus on interactions and iteration, and the organizers of BlackBox CPH encouraged designers to engage in an ongoing conversation during the design process. Finally, BlackBox CPH bills itself as an *experimental* larp festival, encouraging designers to "Take chances, push the limits between

larp and theater, try new things. Blackbox larps are experimental, playful and always challenging the limits for the blackbox larp media" (Blackbox Design).

BlackBox CPH player culture emphasizes helping the designers realize their artistic vision. There is a focus on playing the scenario correctly and it is common for players to ask clarifying questions of the designers during breaks in action to clarify intent, mechanics, or story. There is little emphasis on preparation or communication in advance of the festival, but a widespread reliance on pre-game workshops as part of the game slot during the festival. While an audience is not common in blackbox games, some past scenarios have included audience roles for players while they are not directly involved in the action of the scenario.

To take advantage of the blackbox format scenes in *#TheRealColdtown* were designed around set locations with their own specific scenography, lighting, and music/sound. These included a car constructed out of chairs, ringed by color-changing lights to reflect the mood within the vehicle, The Library Salon, an upscale vampire club in the old public library featuring conversation spaces and a baby grand piano, the Mariachi Shoe Repair, a local hangout featuring a cooler with drinks and limited seating space, and The Meat Market, a vampire club featuring strobe lights and 90's club music. Chairs were set up around the perimeter of the blackbox theater, allowing audience members several vantage points from which to view the actions taking place in different scene locations. The "Social Media" space for BlackBox CPH was the same physical space as the vampire club, but used blue lighting to evoke the virtual space of the internet.

Image 4: Run-time photo of #TheRealColdtown at BlackBox Copenhagen.

In the initial run at BlackBox CPH, Act One was structured so that scenes on the "roadtrip" to the Coldtown and scenes played within the Coldtown took place one after another, separated by *social media interlude* scenes. In order to accommodate the time slot, this meant scenes were each quite short, 10 minutes for most scenes, with some additional time given for the final scene of the act. Act Two was played as short scenes that included characters from both the "roadtrip" and the Coldtown who were now all together in the Coldtown space.
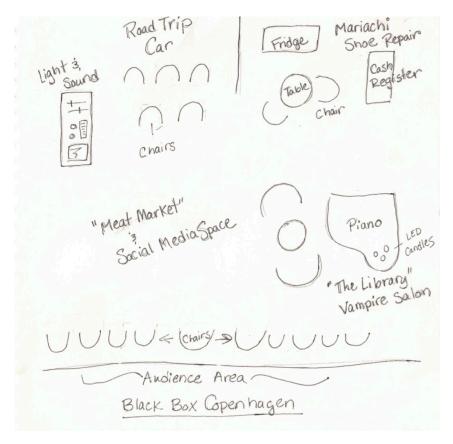
Image 5: Diagram of the blackbox space during the BlackBox Copenhagen run.

For the BlackBox CPH run there were ten participants in the audience. The audience was given a stack of 46 *emoji cards*, with two cards each of 23 unique emojis, which they could hold up as reactions to the players actions during both "real life" scenes and *social media interludes*. The prologue to the scenario took the form of choosing characters, introducing characters and relationships, and an AMA (ask me anything) where each character took the "hot seat" to answer questions from the social media audience. The AMA functioned to help player characters learn about their character, while also allowing the audience to practice using the emoji cards to react to the answers to the various questions.

Between each short *irl* scene there was a *social media interlude* where the audience had a chance to react using their emojis, but also to make comments or ask questions in response to the "social media" post. These interludes could take the form of simulated blog posts, youtube videos, or podcasts made by the player characters, some happening as flashbacks to before the *irl* action of the scenario.

In the feedback session after the BlackBox CPH run participants commented that the scenario sometimes felt chaotic, many participants felt the short scenes didn't allow players or audience members to get a feel for what was happening or build relationships. With ten audience members sharing the *emoji cards* there was a scramble to find appropriate emojis to use, and this also led to a feeling of chaos.

The participants in the audience felt that they often didn't have enough to do during scenes and wanted more participation. They also expressed confusion about what their role during the scenario should be. They were unsure when they should ask questions or make comments. It was clear that more workshopping was needed to make these interactions feel less awkward.

Players commented that they were often unsure of the distinction between what was being released through social media and what was happening *irl*. This distinction was made further confusing by the presence of the *emoji cards*. Players were unsure about how to react to the emojis in scenes that were taking place *irl.* Since the distinction between social media and "real life" was a core theme of the scenario, participants suggested that this distinction be made more concrete during subsequent runs of the game.

RUN TWO: INTERCON 2019

The next run of *#TheRealColdtown* was at Intercon 2019. Run by

New England Interactive Literature, Intercon is a multi-genre, all LARP convention that takes place in New England each spring (New England Interactive Literature). The convention takes place in a hotel and *#TheRealColdtown* was run in one of the larger convention rooms. For this convention we had much less control over the environment than in the blackbox, but we did have slightly more space.

Additionally, Intercon games have slightly different player expectations than the scenarios run at BlackBox CPH. One of the most important is that casting will take place *before* the game, characters will be pre-written, and that players will receive their casting and character sheets in advance of the game. Most games at Intercon have detailed pre-written characters, complex relationships, and expansive world-building. Players expect to be given information about the content of a scenario so they can select whether or not they want to engage with the stated themes. They also anticipate a heavy reading load, as some character sheets and game materials might be up to 20 pages or more. Additionally, popular games are often run multiple times during the convention, or in subsequent years. There is a heavy emphasis on secrets and surprises during games, as well as interesting and elaborate costumes. Games that include an audience are extremely rare at Intercon.

For this run of *#TheRealColdtown* we rewrote the character sheets giving each player a character sheet with their online persona, and a sheet with more private information. The online persona descriptions of each character were sent to both the player characters and the audience participants. During pre-game workshops we encouraged players to play on these distinctions during their "real life" and social media scenes, emphasizing that characters online personas were often heavily edited as opposed to how their character would appear or react in real life interactions.

For the Intercon run we integrated much of the feedback we received from BlackBox CPH. In order to clarify the role of the audience, we gave the social media audience limited "characters" by asking audience members to select 1-2 usernames to use during the scenario and to choose 1-3 characters for each user to "like" or "follow" on social media. This allowed the audience to construct a limited online persona, and the audience members used their different personas to shape their comments, questions, and responses. For example an audience member with the username VampFan gave enthusiastic comments and fawning questions to the vampire character Safiyya, while an audience member with a social justice-themed username critically interrogated the venture capitalist Milton Lloyd about his takeover of the public library for use as a vampire club.

Because interactive audiences are not a feature of most Intercon larps, we were unsure if participants would be willing to give up a game slot to take the role of audience in our scenario. We did have a smaller audience during Intercon, only five participants signed up to be in the audience during the scenario. To make the audience role less chaotic, we gave each audience member their own stack of emojis giving them each a range of emotions as well as some of the more tailored emojis as well. We kept the AMA prologue as a way to workshop "social media" interactions and made some additional changes to clarify the role of the social media audience.

We created a separate "social media" area of the play space. This is where *social media interludes* happened, and where players who were not having scenes could go to make additional posts, or have emergent social media interactions. For the Intercon run, the social media audience was not allowed to observe scenes, unless someone was recording the content to be posted on social media. We encouraged characters to make *social media summary posts* after these scenes: short, twitter-esque posts that gave a summary of events from the character's perspective and had a

table where participants could place these "posts" so everyone could read them.
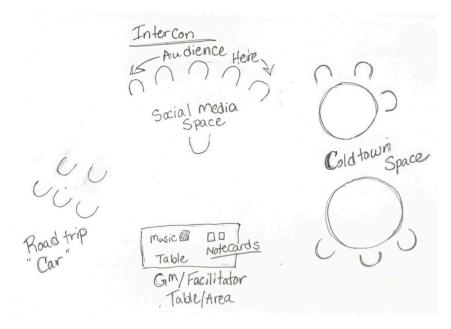

Image 6: Diagram of the space from the Intercon S run.

The final mechanic we included to give the social media audience more engagement, while still keeping their role limited to social media spaces, was the *Private Message* (*PM*) mechanic. Users who were following certain characters, or characters who were not playing scenes, could "private message" each other using hand written notes passed between participants by one of the facilitators.

Finally, we ran the scenes in Act One taking place on the "roadtrip," and those taking place in the Coldtown, simultaneously. This allowed the scenes to run for longer than 10 minutes. In between scenes we still included *social media interludes,* but these often took the form of several social media "posts" from different characters.

These changes really worked to highlight the distinction between "real life" and "social media" within the game, while also providing activities for further audience participation during downtime between *social media scenes*. One audience member remarked after the game that while it wasn't the same as playing in a larp, the experience provided low-key fun after a full day of intense games.

At times, the *PM* mechanic could be a bit distracting, as the pings from the messages (made verbally by the facilitators) would interrupt scenes (much like the ping of someone's phone in real life). But participants reported that they enjoyed the ability to respond to each other in this way. Audience members sent words of encouragement to specific characters, asked provocative questions, or asked about plot threads they were curious about with their *PM*'s. The *PM's* were therefore useful to the facilitators in communicating the plot threads the audience was interested in and allowed us to structure *social media interludes* to draw out these threads, answer audience questions, or provide counter-narratives about important events.

For example, during this run of the scenario, one of the player characters did not show up to play. None of the audience was interested in playing this character, so they simply did not appear during the game, while still having important pre-written relationships with many characters. This missing character soon received their own hashtag *#WhereisLeslie* during *social media scenes*. In *PM's* and *social media scenes* rumors circulated about their whereabouts and audience members questioned who was responsible for their disappearance. This emergent content felt like an accurate simulation of the way information gets disseminated and distorted by social media in real life.

RUN THREE: BIG BAD CON 2019

The final run of the scenario took place at Big Bad Con in 2019.

Big Bad Con is a tabletop and live action gaming convention that takes place in California each fall (Big Bad Con – Returning in 2021). Big Bad Con players have a much more consumer-based mentality. Players often sign up for many events, but often do not attend all the events they sign up for. Socializing and open gaming often compete with scheduled events. There is little communication with players in advance of the convention and no expectation that casting and costume suggestions will be provided by the facilitator. Additionally, there is much more emphasis on adapting scenarios to suit the players, rather than players selecting scenarios that have been carefully scripted by the designers. The safety technique "Lines & Veils," which denotes certain content as off the table, or "fade to black" is commonly used before most game sessions to calibrate player expectations.

Like Intercon, Big Bad Con takes place in a hotel. #TheRealColdtown was held in a large conference room, and was given curtains to divide the space. This meant that curtains separated the Coldtown space, roadtrip space, and the social media space from each other. Participants were unable to see actions taking place in the other areas of the game and sound was muffled between the different spaces. This spatial separation allowed for further development of the "social media" space as a separate play and narrative space that further enhanced the juxtaposition between *irl* and *social media scenes*.
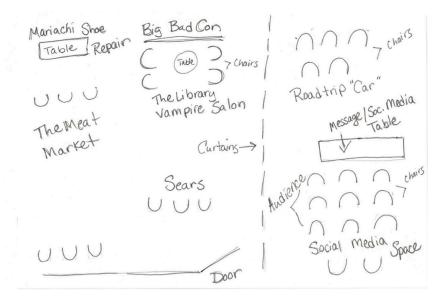
Image 7: Diagram of the space from Big Bad Con run.

For the Big Bad run we kept the new mechanics that had been introduced for the Intercon run. Audience members were instructed to create usernames and choose characters to follow, but this mechanic was less useful given that there were only two audience members for the Big Bad run. In order to provide more of an audience for *social media scenes*, players were instructed to create social media usernames for use during *social media scenes* and given *emoji cards* to use during *social media scenes.* This meant that the audience functioned less as a separate entity in this run, and more like an additional role that players could take on during the scenario.

We noticed more players in the Big Bad run using the social media space when they were not involved in playing *irl* scenes. For example, the venture capitalist character, Milton Lloyd, made several public relations "posts" encouraging investment in the Coldtown. And social media influencers Aubrey and Leslie both made tutorial "videos" about how to achieve different

makeup looks seen at Coldtown parties. We believe this was at least partially due to the availability of a separate social media space in this run.

Image 8: Run-time photo from Big Bad Con run.

The *social media summary posts* were once again set out on a table and made use of different colored notecards to delineate social media posts made by player characters, those made by a general social media user, and private messages. This board was so popular that we ended up having to flip all the notecards over to re-use during Act 2. While the *private message* mechanic was used during the Big Bad run, it was much less prevalent, and less distracting, than in the Intercon run.

DISCUSSION

Our experience developing #TheRealColdtown was initially shaped by the conventions of both our own play culture, and the expectations of BlackBox CPH. Our initial hesitancy to cut the social media audience off from observing the *irl* scenes during

the game stemmed from a worry that the audience would not have enough to do and become bored. But this meant that players and audience members were unclear about how to interact with each other outside the *social media interludes*. Our initial choice to play short scenes was also not well received, as both the audience members and players felt dissatisfied and wanted time to let the story and relationships develop. Running *irl* scenes of the "roadtrip" and in Coldtown simultaneously allowed more time for both *social media interludes* and the *irl* scenes themselves. This change was well received by both players and audience members in subsequent runs.

By more clearly delineating the separate game spaces, creating a separate "social media" area of the game space, we gave both players and audience members greater engagement with the social media themes of the scenario. The *private message* and social media post mechanics both gave audience members a connection to the scenes being played outside the "social media" space, while also preserving the feeling that the social media audience was not accessing the full story. These mechanics complimented the *social media interludes* and led to a stronger feeling of the distinction between "real life" and social media within the game. Allowing different characters to post about the same events further exposed the different narratives that existed in the "social media" space.

While the BlackBox CPH run actively recruited audience members, we did not have the same experience of recruiting larpers as audience members in the subsequent runs. BlackBox CPH offered audience tickets at a discount from player tickets, but this pricing structure did not exist at the other conventions where we ran #TheRealColdtown. Additionally, the culture of many US gaming conventions may make larpers hesitant to give up a slot to sit as an audience rather than as a player in a game.

The Intercon sign-up system had been updated the year we ran

#TheRealColdtown, which allowed us to differentiate sign-ups for audience vs. player roles, however, given that Intercon sign-ups happen in a staggered fashion (participants are allowed to sign up for one game, then a week later for two games, until they can sign up for as many games at they want) and that popular games often fill up as soon as sign-ups open, participants may have been hesitant to give up a slot to play as an audience for an unknown game. Even categorizing the role as "audience" may have given mixed signals to a play community where audiences are not usually part of live-action role-play.

Audiences are, as far as we know, unknown in previous Intercon larps. Horde larps are a more common style in the Intercon community that introduces separate types of players. A horde larp is one in which the players are split into two groups. There is a small set of players called the "cast" who receive a character at the start of the game and play that character throughout. A second set of players, called the "horde," pick up tiny character sheets – usually one or two paragraphs – from a table, play that character for a short period of time, and then when they're done, go get another one repeatedly until the game is over. (Styles of larp) Perhaps we would have gotten a bigger turnout if we'd listed the game as a horde larp, however, the role of the social media audience as we've envisioned it for this game does seem distinct from the concept of the "horde" in a horde larp, as the role was less about cycling through a mass of different horde characters and more about witnessing the narrative of the game from a different perspective.

We had similar problems filling the interactive audience at Big Bad Con. Due to the the sign-up system, which operated on a similarly staggered sign-ups system, player roles for *#TheRealColdtown* were listed under larps (which counted towards a players game quota), while the audience roles were categorized as a panel in order to exclude it from the signup quota. However, the audience role in *#TheRealColdtown* is not the

same as a panel. The lack of a clear category exposes the lack of this type of interactive audience in the Big Bad Con play culture as well.

We speculate that had we initially developed #TheRealColdtown as an interactive theater, or improv, piece that we would have had different challenges and responses. Our own play cultures, based heavily in premiering our games at conventions, and as long time participants in Intercon, shaped our own ideas about player expectations and worries about what would and would not be accepted by larpers. Clearly, some of our ideas were wrong, as the initial run of the game did not integrate the audience as effectively as we'd hoped. The Intercon run benefited not only from being the second iteration of the game, but also from our own deeper knowledge of the play culture, player base, and space of this convention. As long time attendees we also have players who have participated in our other games who were willing to take a chance on this less conventional larp.

The experience of designing *#TheRealColdtown* highlights the importance of iteration, especially when experimenting in the playable theater realm. The second and third iterations of this scenario were more successful because we were able to provide interaction for the audience while still engaging with the core themes of the game. Changes to timing and mechanics were important, but the shaping of the distinct "social media" space was also a key difference that we were able to exploit more thoroughly in each iteration.

Designed initially for an experimental larp festival, *#TheRealColdtown* aimed to explore how the integration of a social media audience could help expand the themes of the game. While the game plays without the addition of the audience, as we witnessed in early play tests, having a distinct audience adds a dimension to the game that we feel is important and interesting. Having a true audience that can respond and interact with "social

media" posts during the game, helps enhance the feeling that Coldtown exists differently in "real life" than on "social media." We are currently working to adapt a virtual version of this scenario which will engage audience members in a different way. We have also considered running this scenario as an improv show. In this case the player characters could be played by improv actors, while the audience members could interact either using the emoji cards, or using a live social media platform such as Discord. Given our experience with distinguishing between *irl* and *social media* interactions, this adaptation might present some challenges. Would we rewrite scenes so that each of them was somehow posted on social media? Would we use the social media audience to shape future scenes? There are different options available. We have also considered running simultaneous versions of *Coldtown* live that would be linked through a social media platform. The live show would be *irl* for each location (potentially separate Coldtowns in different parts of the country) but would be able to share aspects of the live experience with others through an in-game social media platform. In each of these new spaces further iteration will be needed to most effectively meet audience expectations and create fruitful interactions.

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