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**THE LIFE OF  
FREELANCE FILM PRODUCTION  
WORKERS IN THE  
NEW ZEALAND FILM INDUSTRY**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Psychology  
at Massey University

**Lorraine Rowlands**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Eleven male and 10 female freelance production workers were interviewed about their experiences of life within the New Zealand film industry. Respondents' accounts contrast sharply with glamorous images of the industry portrayed in the media. Respondents enjoyed the creative challenges, camaraderie, excitement, and intensity of their working lives and identified strongly with their work. However, they also experienced continual financial insecurity, unpredictable and demoralising periods of unemployment, and recurrent problems maintaining a reasonable work-life balance. Many of the older respondents cited these factors as their main reason for attempting to find work outside the industry.

Female production workers appeared to pay a particularly high price for their involvement in the industry and often sacrificed other areas of their lives for their careers. Women frequently compensated for this imbalance by becoming even more career focussed, thus compounding the problems in non-work areas of their lives.

Respondents' accounts are interpreted in relation to current structural conditions, working practices, and power imbalances within the New Zealand film industry. It is argued that freelance production workers' complex psychological relationship with their work is simultaneously a product of their work environment and helps to perpetuate industry conditions which disadvantage the workforce.

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