My name is Trapper Phillips and to me, there is no such thing as a logical conclusion. Something that really inspires my work is flawed, often awful, people being put into absurd situations. These absurd situations are often treated as normal when they are absolutely insane. I like to find the irony and comedic undertones in these situations and use that as a theme throughout my work.

Recent themes I’ve explored include the absurdity of the Christian fundamentalist for-profit film industries and desperate people faced with making a choice to hide their true identities for profit. I find the idea of Christian fundamentalist films being profitable absurd as well as that this genre would be enticing to the same people who are demonized by these films simply in order to make a profit. The only reason these films are fruitful are because they are preaching to the choir and people think they are making a statement by seeing them. In reality, they are just being pandered to by a different set of grifters. These films are never about being a better person or even about the ritualistic side of religion. It seems the purpose of these films is to whip up a culture war and create panic while cashing in on people dumb enough to go see it. That is not to say there are not films from the other side of the aisle that also do something similar but there are far fewer. It always works and no one picks up on this. That is not even touching on people that see these films as a joke while their money still goes into the same evangelical producer’s pocket.

I aim to expand on my examination of flawed and morally dubious characters and see what depths they sink to. The big question for me is how low someone can really go and still be unscathed by punishment. How much can someone violate the norms and customs of human decency that are normally taken for granted and still be seen favorably by other people? Another element that I am fond of is taking an idea that has legitimate aspects to it and pushing it beyond its logical boundaries. One such example would be a con man taking advantage of mental wellness to get away with bad behavior.

My biggest source of inspiration for my work is dark comedies, cult classics, and transgressive films. I like shock and excess, but I love shock and excess with a good takeaway. The films of John Waters are something that have especially influenced me. I love how there is no restraint in his films, and he revels in excess, but still has a message in them like *Hairspray* or *Serial Mom*. Another influence for me is Mary Harron’s *American Psycho*. To me, the film is a great character study about a truly depraved person who is able to blend into the world and get away with what he does. *Repo Man* by Alex Cox is an inspiration for me as well. The way that the film portrays UFOs crashing to earth, punks robbing liquor stores, and government agents blatantly covering up aliens as a normal part of the world is the essence of what I want to capture in my work. I have also been influenced by many TV shows as well. *It’s Always Sunny In Philadelphia* and *Seinfeld* are series that speak to me creatively. The focus on normal people doing socially unacceptable things and going against the conventions that make society work without consequence is intriguing to me.

At a time where no one wants to take an honest look in the mirror, I want my work to take the absurdity I see and mock it for what it is.