A PROPOSAL FOR BULLY PULPIT INTERNATIONAL · NOVEMBER 3, 2026

Nine episodes. One story. Nine seconds that could change your life.

VERT will develop, shoot and finish a 9-episode vertical microdrama about real people, real scams and the 9 seconds that could stop them.

- 9 × 60-second episodes
- Vertical 9:16
- Sandwich Generation, 35 to 55
- Launch February 2027

WHAT WE HEARD

Scams are more common than most people think.

Take9's mission is clear: teach consumers to take a 9-second beat when they're confronted with situations that might be hidden scams. So the purpose of this series is heavy. How do you create behavior modification? That is our North Star. You asked for a 9-episode vertical microdrama that teaches the habit in a way people will actually watch. Here's what we know about the problem and the audience.

Most adults get scam attempts every day, and about 3 in 10 say they've already lost money or personal information to one. Many victims never report it, so the real number is likely higher.

58%

of US adults get suspected scam attempts every day.

AP-NORC poll, February 2026

~100

scam calls, texts and emails reach the average American every month. That's 3 or 4 a day.

Talker Research for Ping Identity, 2025

$15.9B

lost to scams Americans reported in 2025, a record. Text was the most common first contact.

Federal Trade Commission, 2026

We start with the audience

Every VERT project begins with the audience. We believe the strongest creative is born of insights from the group we are trying to reach, and our mission with Take9 is no different. Before we write a word, we run a quick pulse survey and sit down with the people we want to reach. For this bid, we started early and ran a mini study with parents in Take9's audience.

MINI STUDY · 10 PARENTS, AGES 45 TO 55

- **10 of 10** get suspicious texts, calls or DMs every day. **4** get six or more.
- **8 of 10** got an unpaid toll or package text in the past month. **8** got a fake job offer.
- **7 of 10** have caught themselves about to click, pay or reply, and stopped just in time.
- **6 of 10** rate themselves a 4 or 5 out of 5 at spotting AI voices and video.

WHAT STOOD OUT

- **Suspense keeps them watching.** 6 of 10 said drama or suspense would bring them back for the next episode, and 3 said real stories. Every episode needs real tension and a cliffhanger that makes them want the next one.
- **Half are already watching vertical series.** 5 of 10 watch them. This is our opportunity: the audience is already there, and the other half is still ours to win.

This was a small, early study, so treat the findings as directional. An expanded survey and think tank are available as an optional add-on.

> "I gave some info to a tech guy because I needed help setting up my printer. I immediately canceled the connection, but I was so afraid that my husband and I had to change all of our usernames and passwords."
>
> Survey respondent, on a fake tech support call

So why does the generation running everyone's digital life still get caught?

In this day and age, three things are true for them at once.

Younger people get caught more. Older people lose more.

Young adults fall for scams more often, but older adults lose far more when they do. Parents in the middle are guarding both ends.

They're everyone's tech support.

The Sandwich Generation guards their kids, their aging parents and themselves at the same time.

Scams follow their life.

A job change, dating again, a worried parent: every pressure point is a door a scammer can knock on.

One audience, two generations.

At 35 to 55, Take9's audience is really two generations: older millennials and Gen X. They grew up differently, laugh at different things and think about scams differently. A series that only speaks to one of them loses the other.

35 to 45

Older millennials

GREW UP WITH	AIM, MySpace and the first iPhone
THEIR HUMOR	Self-aware and a little chaotic
ON SCAMS	"I'm online all day. I'd spot it."
WHERE IT GETS THEM	Speed and multitasking: the text tapped between a Zoom call and school pickup

46 to 55

Gen X (a generation that runs into the early 60s)

GREW UP WITH	Landlines, MTV, mixtapes and latchkey afternoons
THEIR HUMOR	Dry, deadpan and sarcastic
ON SCAMS	"I'm too skeptical to get fooled."
WHERE IT GETS THEM	Confidence and trust: "I've handled this for 30 years."

And behind them, the parents they care for. Older Gen X and the youngest Boomers, many of them still caring for parents in their 80s and 90s, are among scammers' biggest targets: Americans 60 and older reported losing about $3 billion to fraud in a single year, according to the FTC.

THE BRIDGE

We build on what they share, not on their age. Both run a household for their kids and their parents, and both are sure they're too smart to get scammed. That confidence is what scammers count on.

OUR IDEA

We hide the lesson inside the story.

The best ideas have to entertain. People learn more when they're entertained than when they're told, so the lesson in this series lives inside the story, not in a lecture. Our mini study points the way: these parents see scams every day, suspense keeps them watching, and real stories pull them in. This generation grew up on Schoolhouse Rock. Few people remember the After School Special, but plenty can still sing "Conjunction Junction." You come for the story, and you leave knowing to take 9 seconds.

The series is one connected storyline with recurring characters and stakes that build from episode to episode. Each episode turns on a real, modern scam, and each ends on a cliffhanger that carries viewers into the next.

Here's our early thinking. It's a starting point, not the story.

THE TONE

Real suspense, with a sense of humor

Our mini study says suspense keeps this audience watching, so the tension is real and the cliffhangers matter. A light touch keeps it warm, never a scary PSA. The scam works because she wants something, which is exactly why the audience will see themselves.

THE ENGINE

How many times in one day can you get scammed?

Every episode, life hands her another scam built on what she's actually dealing with: work, dating again, teens, aging parents.

THE SEASON THREAD

The one scam she wants to fall for

Building on BPI's *Count to Nine*: a dating-app match with a celebrity she's sure is a deepfake. It gives the celebrity lead a real role across the season.

THE PAUSE

A signature moment, not a lecture

The 9-second pause becomes a recurring beat viewers learn to expect, and by episode 9, to do themselves.

The story itself comes after we listen. Once we're awarded, our writers will bring BPI three creative directions to choose from. Every episode will follow the shape you asked for:

0 TO 3 SECONDS	THE MIDDLE	9 SECONDS	THE LAST BEAT
The hook	**The con in motion**	**The pause**	**The cliffhanger**
A line or image that stops the scroll.	A real modern scam, played out the way it really happens: on phones, apps and texts.	The beat where the character slows down, or doesn't.	An unresolved turn that makes people follow for more.

HOW WE'D MAKE IT

How development works.

We listen before we write. Then BPI chooses from three creative directions before a single script is written, so there are no surprises later.

01

Listen

We start from our mini study and Take9's own research. As an optional add-on, we can expand it with a pulse survey of about 100 parents and a guided think tank with 10.

02

Three creative directions

While we listen, our writers start roughing out three distinct directions, then sharpen them with what we hear. Each comes with a logline, tone, the shape of the season and a sample opening hook.

BPI CHOOSES

03

Series bible & season beats

BPI picks one direction. We build the series bible and a beat sheet for all nine episodes.

04

Scripts

All 9 scripts, with 2 rounds of notes from BPI, Aspen Digital and Craig Newmark's team, and a fact check on every scam.

05

One-day shoot

Written to shoot in a single day at one location in Los Angeles, with a small cast: the lead, one supporting actor and a few background. Texts, DMs and scam alerts appear as on-screen graphics added in the edit.

06

Post & delivery

Edit with 3 rounds of notes, color, mix and graphics. Clean and captioned versions of every episode, plus stills.

Schedule

Week of Nov 16

Kickoff

Writers rough out directions. Optional survey and think tank run alongside.

Fri Nov 20

Three directions

Presented to BPI.

Mon Nov 23

BPI picks one

Before Thanksgiving.

Tue Dec 1

Bible & beats

Series bible and 9 episode beats.

Wed Dec 9

Scripts

All 9 scripts, then 2 rounds of notes.

Fri Dec 18

Scripts locked

Cast and locations approved.

Thu Jan 7

Shoot

1 day in Los Angeles. Backup Jan 8.

Jan 11 to 29

Edit

3 rounds of notes, picture lock Jan 29.

Fri Feb 5

Delivery

Captioned and clean, plus stills.

Week of Feb 8

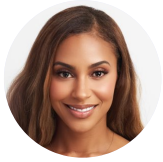
Launch (proposed)

Episode 1 live, then weekly. Date to be confirmed by BPI.

The Team

VERT is a director-led studio that makes vertical work with real craft. We bring together directors, writers and creators who know the format, and we back them with the client service a brand or cause needs to trust us with its message.

This bid brings together VERT's founder, a director with 830M+ microdrama views this year, and a writing team whose credits run from *Frasier* to PBS's *Sid the Science Kid*, a show that taught kids through entertainment.



Hope Dotson Farley

Founder, VERT

25+ years in the entertainment business **Inc. Female Founders 500** **Shorty Award · 6x ADDY · Webby nominee**

Hope Dotson Farley is an advertising and media executive and entrepreneur with more than 25 years in the entertainment business. She founded VERT to elevate vertical storytelling, pairing real craft with the client service a brand or cause needs to trust it with their message. She began her career at Radical Media and produced for companies including Smuggler and Partizan. In 2013 she co-founded Adolescent Content, which she led for over a decade as COO and Executive Producer, building award-winning campaigns for Target, Levi's, Chevy, Always and LG, including the Shorty Award-winning *Life's Good* campaign. Her public-interest work includes Power to Decide and the States of California and New Mexico. She serves on the board of 300 for 300, a nonprofit supporting Black girls in creative fields, and has written for Adweek, Campaign US and MediaPost.



Kristen Brancaccio

Director

830M+ views across her last two microdramas, in 2026

Kristen Brancaccio is a writer-director who has directed more than 18 microdramas and is set to direct her first feature-length film for Dolphin Films in early 2027.

She most recently directed Issa Rae's debut vertical series *Screen Time*, which garnered over 250 million views in its first month on TikTok. Her Audible series *Southern Belle Insults*, starring Keke Palmer, Phaedra Parks, and Zachariah Parks, premiered in August 2026.

She also wrote and directed *Hollywood Starlet* for the new app aTwist, produced by Bradley Bell (*The Bold and the Beautiful*). Her series *Heartstrings and Lies* for Shorts won a Telly Award for Best Vertical Video Series this year. Her vertical work spans ReelShort, NetShort, and DramaShorts, among others. She is attached to direct both the microdrama and feature length adaptation of Clarence Hammond's original short-story *Summer Session* with Ancora Entertainment.

Before verticals, Kristen was a top-10 directing finalist on HBO's *Project Greenlight* for her short *Day One*, and wrote and directed the action-romance pilot *Resistance* for SYFY. She also has extensive music video credits.





Katy Garretson & Micah Goldman

Writers

As a team, Micah Goldman & Katy Garretson optioned their first two feature-length projects to Reckless Pictures and Basset Hound Distribution. They've also sold five vertical series in multiple genres (noir, period, comedy, drama, holiday) to Giovanni Entertainment, and have two YA vertical series, *The Prom Revenge Pact* and *Senior Smear Campaign*, in pre-production with Shorties Studios and CheraTV. They have multiple additional microseries currently being pitched.

Katy Garretson is a Los Angeles-based writer, director, producer, podcaster and professor. She began her award-winning directing career on the TV series *Frasier* and was nominated for a Directors Guild of America (DGA) Award for her directorial debut. She has since directed over 100 episodes of television, including *Two Broke Girls*, *Fuller House*, *School of Rock*, and three seasons of the animated series *Sid the Science Kid*, for PBS. Katy is the recipient of the DGA's prestigious Frank Capra Career Achievement Award. Katy also developed and produced a series of sixteen hit movies, the *Garage Sale Mysteries*, for the Hallmark Channel, hosted the podcast *Mojo Girl Madness*, and for years was a Professor of Directing, Production and Storytelling to both graduate and undergraduate students of the School of Cinematic Arts at her alma mater, USC.

Micah Goldman is a Los Angeles-based writer and producer. He began his career as a writers' assistant on a TV Land sitcom before writing and producing *Tease*, a dramedy pilot for Fox Television Studios. He later produced the John Landis-executive-produced horror comedy *Some Guy Who Kills People*. As a former Creative Executive at Industry Arts, Micah provided development feedback for several years on high-profile projects, including Shia LaBeouf's *Honey Boy* and Netflix's *The Wedding Season*. He is also an Executive Producer on *Stripper Boyz*, a comedy feature streaming on Apple. Most recently, Micah wrote two vertical rom-com series for Refinery Media, distributed by FareFlow, and he currently works full-time as a vertical drama writer for DramaWave.

Selected work from the VERT team



Screen Time

Vertical microdrama

250M+ views in its first month

Watch episode 1 on TikTok ↗

Coverage in TheWrap ↗



The Compatibility Experiment

Dating-show microdrama

580M+ views, 90M in its first 10 days



Hollywood Starlet

Soap-style microdrama

New series

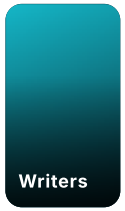
Read about it in Variety ↗



Heartstrings and Lies

Vertical drama series

Telly Award, Best Vertical Video Series



Seven vertical series sold

Five sold, two YA series in pre-production for early 2027

Our writing team



Never a Bother

Youth suicide prevention, co-created with nearly 400 young people

290M+ impressions · Shorty Impact Gold

Watch the campaign ↗



Zero Proof

Teen focus group first, then a creator-led "get ready with me" series on underage drinking

Top-performing series on the channel

See the series ↗



Talking Is Power

Helping parents talk with young people about sex and relationships

21M+ potential impressions in one month

Watch on YouTube ↗

NEXT STEPS

Let's make the pause everyone's habit.

We'd love a follow-up call this week to walk through the approach. On award, we're ready to start right away.

Hope Dotson Farley · Founder, VERT

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